

A358

**Taunton to Southfields
Dualling Scheme**

Public consultation feedback questionnaire
12 October – 22 November 2021



**Response from
the Community
of Parishes**

Introduction

You can use this questionnaire to let us know your views on our proposals for the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme.

We recommend that you read it through first so that you can provide your comments in the appropriate sections. You can answer all the questions or just some of them, depending on the issues that are most important to you.

If you need more space to respond to any of the questions, please set out the rest of your response on separate sheets of paper. Remember to write down which question your comments relate to.

We have produced a set of consultation documents to explain the project and the upgrades we are proposing to make. These include a consultation booklet and Preliminary Environmental Information Report, with an accompanying Non-Technical Summary.

These documents, and an online version of this feedback questionnaire, are available via the project website: www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields

How to submit your feedback questionnaire

You can share your comments with us in a number of ways:

Online: complete the online feedback questionnaire via:
www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields

In writing (by email or post): you can email your questionnaire to:
A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk or you can post your feedback to us at:

FREEPOST A358 TAUNTON TO SOUTHFIELDS

Note: the address must be written in capital letters and you do not need a stamp.

In person (at public information events): fill in and submit a paper feedback questionnaire at one of our public information events, details of which can be found on our website.

Please only use these methods because we cannot guarantee that feedback sent to any other address will be included in our analysis and reporting.

Please send your feedback by **23:59 on Monday 22 November 2021**. Thank you for taking the time to let us know your views.

How your feedback will be used

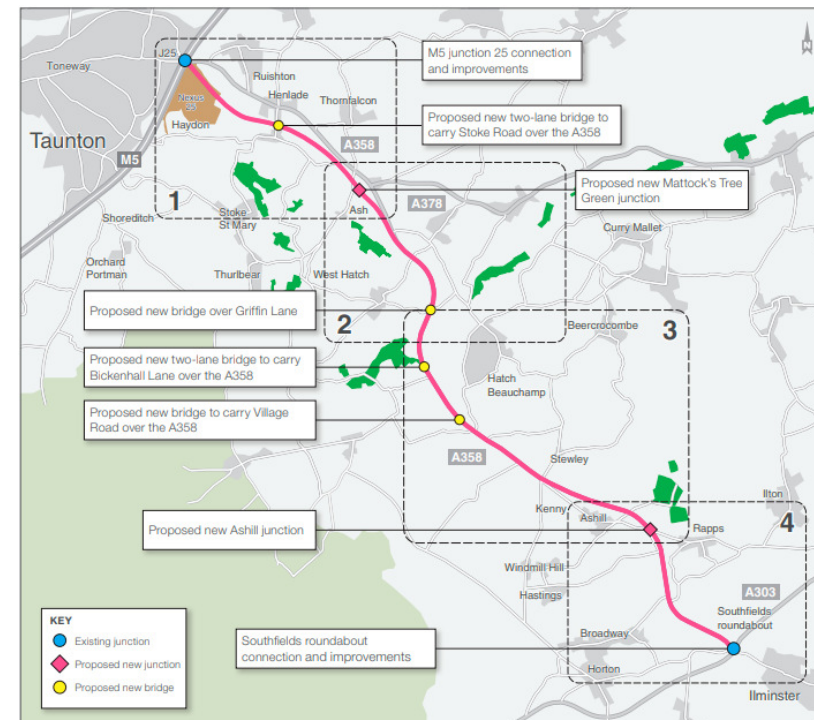
We will take time to consider your feedback when making further refinements to our proposed design and developing our planned mitigation measures. We will set out a summary of the responses that you have given us in a consultation report, with details on how your feedback has shaped and influenced the proposals. This report will form part of our Development Consent Order (DCO) application and will be published following submission of our application. We expect to submit our DCO application in 2022 and, if it is granted, start work in 2024/25.

What we are consulting on

Since announcing our preferred route for the project in 2019 we have been working to refine the design for the new road and develop more detail on our plans than we have shown at previous consultations. We now want to know what you think about these more detailed proposals.

We have divided the route into four sections:

- M5 junction 25 to Mattock's Tree Green junction
- Mattock's Tree Green junction to Griffin Lane
- Griffin Lane to Ashill junction
- Ashill junction to Southfields roundabout



About you

Providing this information is optional but will allow us to update you on the outcome of the consultation and the next stages for this scheme. If you don't want to share these details please just tell us your postcode for the purpose of analysis.

Name:	Community of Parishes: - Convenor: Mr Peter Gregory - Co-ordinator: Mr Robert Burrough
Postcodes:	TA3 6AG, TA3 5BY, TA3 5RJ, TA3 6SG, TA19 9PB, TA19 9RX, TA19 9HB, TA19 0RG, TA19 9QR, TA3 6SY, TA3 7BA, TA20 3NQ, TA3 7AN, TA19 0AN
Email:	Convenor: petergregory999@gmail.com Co-ordinator: b.burrough@holmansfarm.co.uk

Would like to be kept up to date about the project by email?	Yes
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Are you an affected landholder?	Representing community views, including landholders
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Is this a response to the consultation on behalf of an organisation? If yes, which organisation?	<p>Beercrocombe Parish Council Stoke St Mary Parish Council West Hatch Parish Council Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council Ashill Parish Council Broadway Parish Council Ilton Parish Council Donyatt Parish Council Horton Parish Council Curry Mallet Parish Council Pitminster Parish Council Combe St. Nicholas Parish Council Corfe Parish Council</p> <p>Ilminster Town Council will base their Response on this document.</p>
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How did we find out about the consultation?	Participated in Forums
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Principal Issues

Business Case

1. The one element of the business case that has complete support of all local parishes is the need for a Henlade bypass.
2. Faced with the closure of the majority of local connections to our A358 a Community of Parishes has worked together to develop mitigation proposals to make the scheme acceptable to communities that lie close to the A358 and are most adversely affected by the scheme. Parishes require similar accessibility to the new A358 as is currently existing and as provided along much of the A303, and as being provided at the recently authorised Sparkford to Ilchester scheme. The Parish Community provided detailed submissions to National Highways in June, July and September 2021 and some proposals have been incorporated into the scheme. However, accessibility to the A358, severance, the roundabouts, particularly Southfields, and the Expressway standard remain outstanding issues. This response to the Consultation presents the consensus of opinion of the named Parish Councils.
3. It has become evident that pursuance of the 'Expressway Corridor' vision has distorted the thinking behind the current A358 improvement project. Our view is supported by an executive level Independent Assurance Review (IAR)¹ of the scheme during Stage 2, Preferred Route selection, that reported serious concerns regarding the influence a high level aspiration to deliver an Expressway to the Southwest had on the scheme design. Originating in 2014, along with Smart Motorways, the concept of building a sub-category of a Motorway called an Expressway emerged. An Expressway is therefore built to an entirely different scale to an all-purpose trunk road commonly used to link sections of the Strategic Road Network. The Review rated the scheme AMBER/RED, noting that the scheme capital provision was arguably incapable of funding a dualling scheme to Expressway standard, that the deliberate focus on the aspiration prevented comparison with alternative, more affordable options and that the design prioritised the aspiration above all other stakeholder requirements. Of particular note to our locality the IAR concluded that *'the proposed Expressway standard, for which no justification has been presented, may have a major impact on severance on the southern section of the route'*.
4. An Expressway promises high performance, achieving a mile-a-minute travel experience. This is not possible in this scheme as both the eastern and western ends of the link terminate in roundabouts, the latter a double roundabout with traffic lights. The congestion that exists on this link emanates from the roundabouts and on the western end is exacerbated by the adjoining village of Henlade. As the scheme does not, and will not, bypass these roundabouts with free-flowing grade separated junctions the objectives set in the 2014 Road Investment Strategy (RIS) ^{1 2} will not be achieved. Money spent on the Expressway aspiration is money wasted, requiring more resources like prime agricultural land and construction material for the excessively complex junctions, central barrier and boundaries. Rather than accept this conclusion Highways' England Executive embarked on a cost cutting exercise³ that decided the scheme would proceed with the expensive Expressway, but without any 'extras' like the requirement for a Hatch Beauchamp junction. Consequently, local communities are denied the historical connectivity that is their right because of a misplaced high level aspiration.
5. The business case for the scheme needs to be rewritten with emphasis on a Henlade bypass and resolving the sources of congestion at the roundabouts. The link itself is not the major priority but any new road should be cheaper, simpler and environmentally less damaging.

¹ Obtained through FOI/2578. IAR , formerly known as Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway Review 2: Delivery Strategy.

² The 2020 RIS 2 describes the A358 scheme as a dual carriageway link. The sole Expressway scheme in RIS 2 was the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, recently cancelled due to the low benefit to cost.

³ Obtained through FOI/2578. Full SGAR 2_Redacted - End of Stage Report - 2019.05.24.

Governance

6. Following the Stage 2 decision to abandon the free-flowing grade separated junction with the M5 the scheme lost its ability to achieve Expressway status. However, the high level aspiration to build the first section of the 'A303 Expressway Corridor' materially weakened governance that should have directed National Highways towards an efficient, value for money design based on trunk road specification. The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and associated documents describes the scheme in its totality. Unfortunately the design does not address the real issue of the roundabouts at both ends of the link, which cause congestion and significantly reduces the average speed across the scheme. National Highways attempts to obscure this failure by not including the congestion at the roundabouts in the issues needed to be resolved nor within the road typology (PEIR, 1.2.9). Rather National Highways transfers blame for congestion onto the link between the roundabouts. Contrary to what National Highways implies about safety along the route the current A358 and surrounding area has an accident rate lower than the national averages (PEIR, 12.6.69/70), and east of Thornfalcon there is no evidence of traffic joining the A358 being the cause of congestion.

7. National Highways avoids use of the word Expressway because of sensitivity of the costs associated with building a sub-category of a Motorway for an 9-mile link. Rather it describes the road as a high quality dual carriageway. As National Highways does not build low quality dual carriageways the description is meaningless and is used to obscure scrutiny. Because of their cost Expressways are rigorously governed by GD 300 standards, the title of which is General Principles & Scheme Governance, Requirements for new and upgraded trunk roads (Expressways). GD 300 is within a library named Design Manual for Road and Bridges (DMRB) and as the title suggests provides governance over National Highways design. GD 300 stipulates that the whole standard must be applied within an Expressway scheme. A key component of an Expressway is that all junctions are required to be at full-grade separation (GD 300, Table E/5.2), but the scheme fails this requirement as the link terminates at at-grade roundabouts, one even with traffic lights. In this situation GD 300 governance directs National Highways to categorise the scheme as an All-Purpose Trunk Road (GD 300, E/5.1) built according to CD 109 standards (Highway link design) with all other design requirements re-evaluated (GD 300, E/1.4). This governance related directive does not permit a departure from standards (GD 300, Table E/F.31) and is in place to ensure that schemes are efficient, provide value for money, and minimise the environmental impact, mandates placed upon National Highways by its Licence (Paragraphs 4.2d and g). If governance had been followed the scheme would have followed a simpler, cheaper design, evidenced within the 2019 Scheme Assessment Report (SAR) conclusion that the route could be simplified if Expressway standards were not applied (SAR, 7.1.8).

8. As National Highways will evade this issue it needs to be stressed that GG 101, General Principles & Scheme Governance, states the verb 'shall' is an explicit requirement placed on National Highways by DMRB governance and its Licence. The scheme encompasses three at-grade roundabouts, which means it fails the junction requirements of an Expressway as detailed in GD 300, E/5.2 and E/6.9, and therefore must be categorised as required by E/5.1.

E/5.1 Highway links shall be designed in accordance with CD 109 (i.e. Table A.2).

E/5.2 Expressways shall be designed in accordance with the requirements of Table E/5.2.

Table E/5.2 Additional types of road

Additional types of road added to Table A.2 of CD 109 [Ref 12.N]						
Type of road	Sub category	Edge treatment	Direct access treatment (see CD 123 [Ref 6.N] for a definition of direct access)	Junction treatment at minor road intersection (see CD 123 [Ref 6.N] and CD 116 [Ref 8.N])	<u>Junction treatment at major road intersection</u> (see CD 123 [Ref 6.N], CD 122 [Ref 7.N] and CD 116 [Ref 8.N])	Previous category reference used in GD 300
Dual 2 lane expressway (D2E) – 7.3 metre carriageway	a	Nearside- 1 metre hard strip. Offside- 1 metre hard strip	Not permitted - motorway regulations	Not permitted - motorway regulations.	<u>Full grade separation</u>	7d

An evaluation of the Preferred Route compatibility with GD 300 requirements, which came into effect in May 2019 just after the end of Stage 2, should have been undertaken at the commencement of Stage 3, at which point DMRB governance should have directed a decision to categorise the route as a D2AP road as described in Table A.2 and designed in accordance with CD 109.

Table A.2 Dual carriageway roads

Type of road (see CD 127 [Ref 1.N])	Sub-category	Edge treatment	Direct access treatment (see CD 123 [Ref 2.N] for a definition of direct access)	Junction treatment at minor road intersection (see CD 123 [Ref 2.N] and CD 116 [Ref 4.N])	<u>Junction treatment at major road intersection</u> (see CD 123 [Ref 2.N], CD 122 [Ref 3.N] and CD 116 [Ref 4.N])	Previous category reference used in TD 9 Table 4 (see note 1)
Dual 2 lane All-purpose roads (D 2AP) - 7.3 metre carriageway	b	No pedestrian footways or cycle tracks. Nearside - hard strip. Offside - hard strip.	Minimise number of direct accesses to avoid standing vehicles and concentrate turning movements. Clearway (see TSM Chapter 3 [Ref 7.N])	No minor junctions at-grade. No gaps in the central reserve.	<u>At-grade roundabouts.</u> Full grade separation.	6

9. A recent response to a consultation query⁴ demonstrates the ambiguities within National Highways' compliance with design principles and governance, a requirement placed on National Highways' Licence (5.28) and by GG 103, Sustainable Development and Design, (5.1 and Note). E/5.2 and Table E/5.2 are explicit that a junction at a major road intersection, i.e. the A358 Expressway and the M5, is to be a FULL grade separated

⁴ Email response from National Highways to Mr Martin Hills dated 15 November 2021.

junction, requiring free flowing merges and diverges. As this is not provided in the scheme National Highways defends the A358 Expressway standard by insisting Junction 25 is a grade separated terminal junction, ignoring the at-grade conflicts with other connections at the roundabout. Its own traffic analysis concludes that the roundabout and its traffic management introduce delays that totally undermine the high-performance promise of an Expressway standard. National Highways admits that both Nexus 25 and Southfields do not comply with Expressway standards but chooses to ignore E/5.1 and E/5.2 governance stating the standards that it is working to - Appendix E/F of GD 300 - are only advisory, quoting Clause E/F1.1. This is not the case as the Clause also directs the level of applicability to be followed in any design, and Table E/F.31 states that Table E/5.2 is applicable to Level 1 and 2 Expressways. The footnote to Table E/F.31 reinforces this point stating *'DG/E/5.2/1 [Level 1 & 2] The requirements in Table E/5.2 apply. If requirements in Table E/5.2 are not applied in accordance with this it prevents future compatibility with level 3 and 4 without further major interventions'*. It is symptomatic of National Highways to cherry-pick what it does and does not observe within the DMRB manuals. With regard to the Community of Parishes proposals we have been repeatedly told that several are not permitted due to non-compliance with Appendix E/F, which National Highways is now stating is only advisory. Within its response National Highways also describes the Expressway scheme as being future-proofed and compliant with anticipated future changes. With climate change measures already effecting national infrastructure projects across the UK, this claim is very questionable.

10. It is extraordinary that National Highways is proposing to build an Expressway, yet does not use the name itself in any documentation presented at the Statutory Consultation. National Highways only refers to GD 300 standards once, in Table 3.1 to record that the imposition of GD 300 standards is the reason all current at-grade junctions along the A358 are to be closed. The fly-through video of the scheme has shocked local people by the extraordinary complexity of the carriageway and junctions, the excessive scale of the central reserve, the extravagance of the boundary and drainage system and the overall urbanisation of what is a country road. The build specification of an Expressway has clearly led to a large inflation of the cost of the scheme and its environmental impact. Compounded by the Stage 2 decision to abandon the free-flowing grade separated junction with the M5 the Benefit-to-Cost Ratio is now at the very low level of 1.2 (A358 Technical Traffic Note, 7.1.3). National Highways' insistence on building a high cost Expressway jeopardises the viability of the scheme.

11. As detailed in paragraph 4 above the decision to remove the Hatch Beauchamp junction and other slip road accesses from the scheme was to save money that was needed to finance the Expressway itself. This, National Highways has consistently refused to acknowledge. Rather it blames the imposition of Expressway/Motorway standards that do not permit connections to minor roads as detailed in GD 300 Table E/5.2 to obscure the real reason. However, such connections may be permitted (GD 300, E/6.7). Indeed, the approved Ashill junction is connected to three C-class roads so it is equally possible to approve a Hatch Beauchamp junction connecting Staple Fitzpaine Road, Village Road, and Wood Road via service road, all C-Class roads, to the A358. Although local parishes disagree with the Expressway standard, all of their proposals for access has followed CD 122 grade separated taper merge/diverge slip road standards and hence are compatible to both an Expressway and an All-Purpose Trunk Road.

Design Failings

12. Much of thinking behind the scheme design has been remote, desk-top analysis and modelling by a design process that showed little empathy with the locality and the views of local residents and businesses. Moreover, Expressway ideology has gone against the underlying safety principle that a road network feeds traffic from minor roads onto major roads as quickly and efficiently as possible. The scheme ignores this principle and rather than provide safe taper merge/diverge slip access to the A358 diverts traffic 2-3 miles along unclassified and C Class lanes and roads, and even through villages, to reach the two junctions providing access to the A358. Rural lanes and roads are not well maintained by Somerset Highways and with the increase traffic load placed on them by the scheme the situation will worsen. Furthermore, in winter the rural network is often slippery with leaves, mud and surface water, and the narrow lanes can be very dark, with overlying shadows. During seasonal work the network is busy with

farm vehicles, which often follow a one way system for long distance haulage of crops. The scheme as designed will prevent this occurring exacerbating conflict between farm traffic and between other vehicles.

13. The A358 Technical Traffic Note provides some limited data on the performance of the scheme and within the local rural network. Although journey times are modelled to the second no similar precision is provided regarding the locations at which modelled journeys commence and finish. However, with the data available it is possible to assess that the average speed along the scheme is a modest 50mph in 2028 and 47mph in 2043. This is some way below the design speed of an Expressway and is caused by delays at and across the Taunton and Southfield roundabouts of 3 and 4 minutes in 2028 and 2043 respectively. As National Highways traffic models are constructed to reflect typical conditions on an average weekday the performance during the holiday season will be considerably worse.

14. For this very modest performance that is far below RIS objectives local residents and businesses have been denied normal A303 type of access. The Sparkford to Ilchester scheme, that was recently approved by the Secretary of State for Transport, and part of the same RIS 1 programme, was designed to replicate A303 standards whilst following CD 109 requirements and does provide good access to the rural network. This is not the case for the A358. Moreover, the modelling of the local road network shows this lack of access increases traffic through Hatch Beauchamp by nearly 1,000 vehicles a day and through Ashill by 2,000+ vehicles a day. This traffic is funnelled in through local lanes and roads meaning residents, businesses, walkers, cyclist and horse riders will all be adversely impacted not only from the increased traffic but also from an increase in noise and vibration, often above NPSNN (National Policy Statement for National Networks) tolerance levels.

15. Highways England shows no empathy regarding the effect of the proposed design on the social fabric of the communities through which the road passes. Access to shops, fuel, surgeries, churches, village halls, recreation, leisure and social venues, is vital to the wellbeing of the local parish communities. Except for the clear benefits of a Henlade bypass, conclusions reporting the scheme benefits on local communities are weak and subjective (PEIR, 12.9.20, 12.9.83, Table 16-1), using phrases 'likely slight beneficial', 'considered to lead to slight beneficial effect', 'improving the perception of connectivity'. There is no detailed assessment of the problems the scheme will bring to local society as required by GG 104. GG 104 defines Other Parties as people living or working adjacent to the road or using the local rural network affected by the scheme. GG 104 governance requirements arise from statutory legislation (Section 3(1), Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974) that mandates National Highways to reduce the risk to Other Parties to 'as low as is reasonably practical' (ALARP), a higher level of safety than required for actual road users. In spite of this statutory requirement National Highways has not mitigated the risks to Other Parties to an ALARP level. Neither has National Highways embedded design measures to avoid or reduce the adverse impact of noise and vibration as required by the NPSNN (NPSNN 5.195 and PEIR, Table 11.25). Overall, the scheme imposes adverse noise effects on 813 residential properties with only 324 benefiting. Disturbingly, National Highways can only anticipate that the scheme will lead to a slight beneficial effect on local human health. Illustrating the total lack of understanding of the locality, National Highways highlights the positive health outcome in North Curry and Stoke St Gregory, two villages well connected to the A378 some 3-5 miles distant, while ignoring the adverse impact on Hatch Beauchamp, Ashill, Broadway, Ilton and Horton, which adjoin the scheme.

16. National Highways has provided no response to the question of why an Expressway design was chosen for the route, a decision that goes against its own route categorisation governance. No comparison analysis between a GD 300 Expressway and a CD 109 link trunk road has been undertaken. Consultation webinar questions elicited the admission that speed along the link would not be adversely impacted by a non-Expressway design. More profoundly was the admission that the Expressway ideology of a mile a minute travel could not be attained across the scheme because of the speed limitation of the Southfields, Nexus 25, and Junction 25 roundabouts.

17. The Statutory Consultation exposes serious failings within this National Highways scheme. Unequivocally, governance does not permit the building of a 9-mile Expressway to link roundabouts. The proposed design is extravagant in land usage, unnecessarily cutting a great, environmentally damaging, swathe through a rural landscape at an unacceptable cost to the tax-payer. Except for the Henlade bypass the scheme gives very little back to the local community, adversely impacting their safety and wellbeing so that commuters and seasonal holiday travellers can speed to, and queue at, a roundabout before joining an already overloaded M5 or Ilminster bypass. The Henlade bypass and redesign of the two roundabouts should be completed before any consideration is given to dualling east of Thornfalcon. In that event, mitigation proposals given by local parishes, as an honest attempt to reconcile the adverse impact of the scheme, should be incorporated. It goes against all principles of governance that Community Mitigation Proposals are dismissed by exploiting compliance criteria within DMRB GD 300, whilst ignoring the non-compliance of National Highways' own scheme proposals. Governance requires National Highways to redesign the scheme as an All-purpose Trunk Road following CD109 Highways Link design criteria. Incorporating the proposed mitigation, this perfectly adequate specification, will provide a route usable to all travellers, local and distant.

Value for Money

18. In the value for money assessment the benefits of the scheme are compared to the costs of constructing it. Time saved by users of the A358 form a significant part of benefits, but the value for money assessment also covers other aspects such as road safety and environmental impacts (A358 Technical Traffic Note, 7).

19. Table 6-1 of the Technical Traffic Note reports time saved with the scheme is of 5 to 6 minutes for a typical average weekday journey (2.1.1). During seasonal holiday periods when traffic is considerably greater than average the time saved would be less because of the increased queue time at the terminal roundabouts. According to the executive level Independent Assurance Review a journey time savings of 6 minutes is unlikely to be of benefit to longer distance travellers, which places a damming assessment on the time saving benefits of the scheme. Regarding safety, National Highways own statistics proves the current A358 and surrounding area has an accident rate lower than the national averages (PEIR, 12.6.69), and with the exception of the Henlade bypass the environmental impact of the scheme is wholly negative.

20. It is therefore not surprising that the Benefit-to-Cost ratio of the scheme is at the very low value of 1.2. Knowing the cost of meeting the Expressway aspiration is very large, it appears irrational not to have developed a cheaper, simpler non-Expressway alternative design.

Consultation

21. During the 2021 consultations ten parishes that lie directly within the scheme developed proposals that would mitigate the adverse impact of the scheme to an ALARP level. These proposals were at the centre of the consultation Forums held by National Highways. It is unfortunate that National Highways excluded the proposals from all statutory consultation material, including DCO preparatory documents like the PEIR. The latest revision of the community proposals has been incorporated into this consultation response.

22. The Consultation presented 7 key documents of which one, the PEIR, is 792 pages long with 36 Appendices and over 150 Figures. The scheme is extremely complicated and the 6-week consultation period is too short to enable the information to be assimilated with any rigour. National Highways was slow in responding to email questions and the web centric format is unfamiliar to many within a rural population. The face-to-face events were very limited in number and open times, and the complexity of the paper and online Questionnaires discouraged responses from

individuals.

23. On issues of this scale most parishioners leave it to the Parish Council to represent their views. Besides the task of appraising the scheme Parish Councils have to draft a response, circulate and brief parishioners, and redraft until consensus is achieved. This takes time and the 6-week consultancy period is an unnecessary tight schedule. Furthermore, nowadays, most drafting is done in a Word editor. National Highways made this expected task difficult by not providing a Word based template. This response uses a manually produced copy of the Questionnaire format.

24. The Statutory Consultation was a public relations exercise to elicit support for a scheme centred on delivering an Expressway. No evidence has been provided that an Expressway is the most appropriate standard to be applied. No comparison to a trunk road design standard has been published. Traffic analysis provided did not present the worse case scenario of peak holiday traffic thereby obscuring the inability of the scheme to resolve one of its major objectives. The public has not been provided with the information needed to make an informed opinion.

Section 1 – M5 junction 25 to Mattock's Tree Green junction

1a) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals to upgrade M5 junction 25 and the Nexus roundabout?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
				✓	

Reasons for response to 1a.

- (1) The proposed upgrades to M5 junction 25 and the Nexus roundabouts do not remove the congestion and delays experienced at these junctions, which will remain at-grade priority/traffic light controlled.
- (2) Modelling of the performance of the roundabouts presented at the Consultation uses average daily traffic flows, not the high traffic flows experienced during holiday periods. Modelling predicts queuing will occur at the roundabouts even at these average traffic flows and consequently longer queues than reported in the Consultation documents will remain on the new A358 during holiday periods (Webinar, 4/11/21).

1b) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for a new bridge over the A358 at Stoke Road?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
		✓			

Reasons for response to 1b. No comment.

1c) Further comments about the plans for Section 1: M5 junction 25 to Mattock's Tree Green junction.

- (1) The Community of Parishes emphasises their full support for a Henlade bypass to be built.
- (2) There is no evidence for building the dual carriageway to an Expressway build standard. GD 300 E/5.1 directs the highway link between Southfields roundabout and M5 Junction 25/Nexus roundabouts to be designed in accordance with CD 109.

Section 2 - Mattock's Tree Green junction to Griffin Lane

2a) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for Mattock's Tree Green junction, including the connections to local roads such as to Henlade via the existing A358, the A378 Langport Road and Ash Road?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
			✓		

Reasons for response to 2a.

The spur off the northern roundabout to Henlade is considered unwarranted and local traffic to and from Henlade should flow via the existing Thornfalcon junction modified as required to provide the necessary connections to the A358. This would discourage a rat-run developing through Henlade and Creech St Michael. It would also reduce costs and reduce the impact the junction will have on the local landscape, including light pollution, particularly from the west. Parishes have similar concerns about a rat-run developing through Stoke St Mary, so any final design must mitigate against this outcome by restricting traffic along Ash Road. Although National Highways has recently concluded the proposal to retain the existing Thornfalcon junction would result in a junction that performs less well in both highway safety and traffic management terms we believe there is a strong case for reviewing the Mattock's Tree Green junction as a whole. In its conclusion National Highways did note that potential refinements were possible following the outcome of the statutory consultation.

2b) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for a new connection to provide access for the Somerset Progressive School, the Huish Woods Scout Campsite and local businesses at Nightingale Farm Units.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
✓					

Reasons for response to 2b.

As the community of local parishes recommended this connection it is strongly supported.

2c) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for a new connection linking Village Road to the Mattock's Tree Green junction to provide access to Hatch Beauchamp for residents and local businesses?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
✓					

Reasons for response to 2c.

As the community of local parishes recommended this connection it is strongly supported.

2d) Do you have any other comments about our plans for Section 2: Mattock's Tree Green junction to Griffin Lane?

(1) There is no evidence for building the dual carriageway to an Expressway build standard. GD 300 E/5.1 directs the highway link between Southfields roundabout and M5 Junction 25/Nexus roundabouts be designed as a trunk link road in accordance with CD 109.

(2) The 2019 SAR reported the requirement for departures from standards within this section relating to sight distances, and horizontal and vertical geometry around the Hatch Beauchamp bypass. No information on the consequences of these departures from standard has been published within the Consultation documentation.

Section 3 – Griffin Lane to Ashill junction

3a) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for a new bridge at Bickenhall Lane to provide access for vehicles, walkers, cyclists, horse riders and disabled users?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
				✓	

Reasons for response to 3a.

(1) As explained in Figure 10-1, A358 Technical Traffic Note, traffic from Staple Fitzpaine, Curland, New Town and Bickenhall areas wanting to go towards Taunton will have to use this new Bickenhall Lane bridge enroute to and from Mattock's Tree Green junction. Without the scheme most of this traffic would enter or leave the A358 south of Hatch Beauchamp, bypassing the village. With the scheme this traffic will be diverted into Hatch Beauchamp through Bickenhall Lane East, shown in the Google Streetscene below, a narrow single-track lane. At the junction with Village Road this

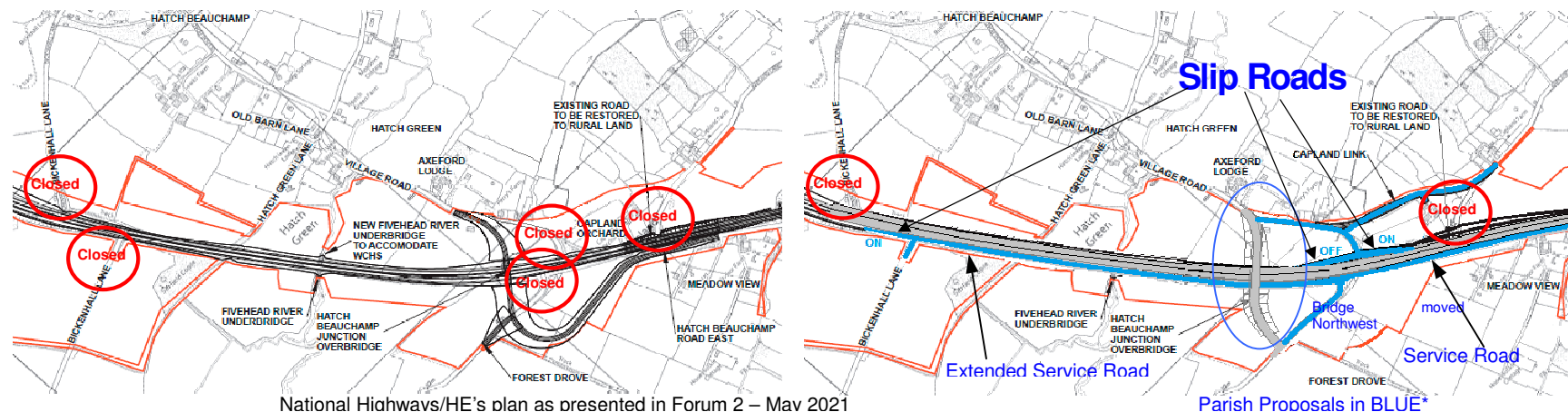


traffic would turn left and drive through the centre of the village, passing the village green, a children's play park and a large residential and nursing care home. Similarly, Hatch Beauchamp residents who live on the southern side of the village and who would, without the scheme, use Bickenhall Lane East and Village Road South to access the A358 will, with the scheme, be diverted north through the village centre to access the A358 at Mattock's Tree Green junction. The reverse would occur in traffic travelling from Mattock's Tree Green junction. There would be no compensating reduction in traffic through Hatch Beauchamp from the Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe area as their routing remains the same without and with the scheme. The overall impact of not providing access to the A358 south of the village, estimated from SAR traffic data, will be 800-900 more vehicles a day passing through the centre of Hatch Beauchamp.

(2) National Highways uses prescribed modelling to forecast the impact of the scheme on local traffic. From consultation discussions it is clear that the large number of variables that include traffic flow rates, traffic types (ranging from HGV, large and often very dirty farm machinery through to residential cars and WCH), destinations, road/lane capacity, seasonal farm traffic, driver preferences and behaviour, road/lane maintenance standards, impact of weather and seasons, etc. makes predicting the impact of the scheme particularly challenging. However, in spite of the logic presented in (1) above, National Highways insists the impact of the scheme on Hatch Beauchamp village will be negligible.

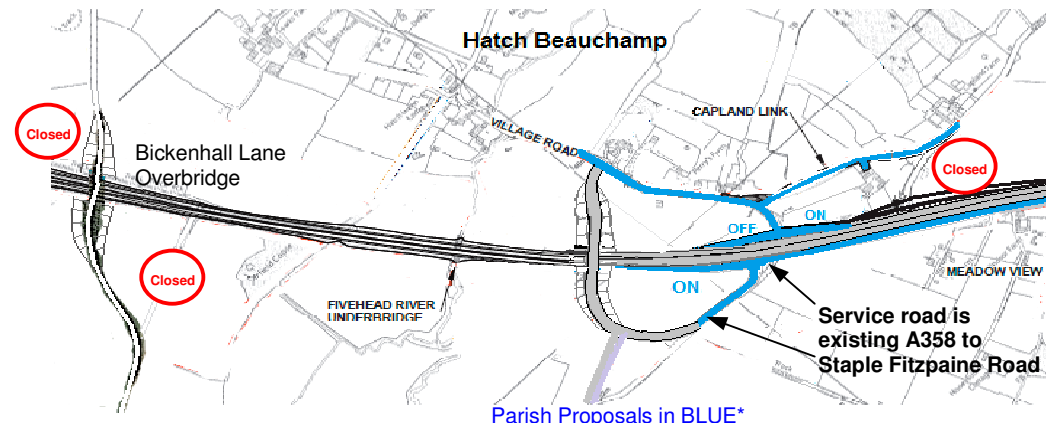
(3) Local parishes voiced their concerns at the lack of access to the scheme south of Hatch Beauchamp throughout the consultations that took place in 2019 and during 2021. Indeed the 2019 SAR included the requirement for a junction south of Hatch Beauchamp (Section 3e)(1) refers) but it was removed without any published analysis following a Highways' England Executive cost cutting exercise⁵ that decided the scheme would proceed without any 'extras' like the Hatch Beauchamp junction. The Community of Parishes has continued to present proposals to mitigate the adverse impact of the scheme within this section.

(4) The first assumed the Bickenhall overbridge was not present. As Bickenhall Lane is a busy local route favoured by farm traffic and lorries, the lane needs to be kept open by extending the planned service road from Ashill to Hatch Beauchamp overbridge to Bickenhall Lane. A CD 122 Layout A Option 1 taper merge slip road access should be provided onto the westbound carriageway at the western end of this extended service road. Offset savings will be made by not requiring suitability assessments of the diversionary routes proposed and the improvements that would be required on these routes to make them acceptable. An example of this type of junction is at the A356/Ringwell Hill/A303 connection at Bower Hinton. National Highways objects to this proposal on cost grounds, the interest of other stakeholders and the impact on Bickenhall Wood. The latter experiences an adverse impact from the Expressway itself (PEIR, Table 16-1), so moving the carriageway slightly to accommodate a slip road could bring overall benefit to the wood.



⁵ Obtained through FOI/2578. Full SGAR 2_Redacted - End of Stage Report - 2019.05.24.

(5) The second proposal assumed the bridge is built. In this case the western end of the service road should terminate at the existing Staple Fitzpaine junction, from which point a CD 122 Layout A Option 1 taper merge slip road should be provided onto the westbound carriageway. The service road with this on-slip enables traffic from Kenny, Wood Road, Folly Drove, Meadow View, Staple Fitzpaine Road and Hatch Beauchamp Village Road to efficiently access the westbound carriageway. Highways England's 2017 traffic data indicated some 2500 vehicles accessed the existing A358 from roads leading into the scheme's service road. This local traffic, which will continue to grow, must retain access to the new A358 rather than the scheme route via Hatch Beauchamp to Mattock's Tree Green junction and Ashill to Ashill junction.



3b) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for Village Road to be diverted via a bridge across the A358?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
			✓		

Reasons for response to 3b

- (1) Local residents welcome the adoption of the community proposal to site the Hatch Beauchamp overbridge about 250m Northwest.
- (2) The existing Village Road from Hatch Beauchamp needs to be connected to the eastbound carriageway via on-off slip roads. These slip accesses are required to significantly reduce the need for local traffic to drive through Hatch Beauchamp and Ashill villages, so providing an acceptable ALARP solution as mandated by GG 104, Scheme Governance, Requirements for Safety Risk Assessment. Figure A.4, CD 122, Design of Grade Separated Junctions, gives a generic layout of a grade separated half-cloverleaf junction, which the community proposal follows. The proposal also minimises land usage and with the slip roads located close to existing junctions their impact on local residents would be minimal.

Understandably, without a fully developed design some residents have expressed concern about the impact of the slip roads, combined with the overbridge and possible Capland link. Good design and extended village speed limit would remove those concerns.

(3) National Highways dismisses these proposals for very weak, ideological reasons. Irrationally it uses GD 300 as the governing document to dismiss a community proposal that is in accordance with CD 122 standards, whilst ignoring the fact GD 300 prohibits the at-grade priority junctions at Southfields, Nexus 25 and Junction 25 roundabouts.

3c) At Capland, which option would you prefer to provide a connection between local villages in this area?

Please tick one choice

- ✓ Option 1 Provide a connecting link road between Capland Lane and Village Road
- Option 2 Retain the existing route via Stewley Lane and Stock's Lane and provide localised flood improvements
- Option 3 Retain the existing route via Stewley Lane and Stock's Lane without providing localised flood improvements

Reasons for response to 3c.

The Capland Lane link should be no more than a single lane in keeping with the existing lane. It would prevent severance of Capland Lane residents from the village of Hatch Beauchamp and provide a flood free route to Village Road. The link is also needed to provide access to Capland Orchard Farm and as an alternative path for bridleway T14/25 that is the current WCH link. The proposal to carry out works to attenuate the flood risk on Stock's Lane and Stewley Lane would have none of these benefits and would involve costs akin to the provision of a link

3d) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals between Capland and Ashill on the western side of the A358? To summarise, they would allow the existing road to be converted to a local route, connecting to the new Village Road bridge and providing connectivity between Ashill and Hatch Beauchamp, keeping access to properties along this route.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
			✓		

Reasons for response to 3d.

(1) The Community of Parishes propose that the existing roads and junction at Stewley Cross remain, and become the eastern extent of the service road. Slip road access from the westbound carriageway onto the service road should be provided at this point. This would enable local traffic from Ilminster heading for Kenny, Wood Road, Folly Drove, Meadow View, Staple Fitzpaine Road, Bickenhall Lane and Hatch Beauchamp to bypass Ashill village. This proposal provides a very important part of an ALARP solution to this section of the scheme.

(2) Without the slip road access at Hatch Beauchamp Village Road South and on the western and eastern ends of an extended service road it is estimated that some 2000+ vehicles a day will be diverted through Ashill village to reach the junction on its eastern boundary. National Highways must acknowledge that this traffic increase poses a severe safety risk on residents. Although ALARP level mitigation is a mandatory requirement, no

mitigation at all has been incorporated. The proposed Stewley Link is inconsequential in reducing this traffic. With numerous residential developments within Ashill already approved the risks to safety and general well-being will grow from National Highways' under estimated baseline. All the advantages provided to the village by the building of the Ashill bypass will be taken away, negatively changing the whole character of the village.

3e) Do you have any other comments about our plans for Section 3: Griffin Lane to Ashill junction?

(1) It is within this section that cost-cutting has had a severe negative impact on local communities. The 2019 SAR published a popular proposal to provide an additional junction south of Hatch Beauchamp (SAR, Figure 6.15 and Table 6.13) to specifically improve connectivity and reduce the flow of traffic through Hatch Beauchamp and Ashill, contradicting the current National Highways analysis of traffic flows. The removal of this junction by the then Highways England Executive leads to the conclusion, further evidenced by the high-level IAR report, that the dogmatic pursuance of an Expressway aspiration has bleed funding away from providing a usable A358 to local communities. There remains no evidence for building the dual carriageway to an Expressway build standard. GD 300 E/5.1 directs the highway link between Southfields roundabout and M5 Junction 25/Nexus roundabouts be designed as a trunk link road in accordance with CD 109.

(2) GG 104 defines Other Parties as people living or working adjacent to the road or using the local rural network affected by the scheme. Clause 2.12 requires National Highways to conduct a safety risk assessment to clearly identify all sub-populations within Other Parties and record how each is or can be affected by the scheme. Furthermore, GG 104 mandates National Highways to reduce the risk to Other Parties to as low as is reasonably practical, a higher level of safety than required for actual road users. National Highways has not mitigated the risks to Other Parties to an ALARP level because of the cost involved, and is using the GD 300 restrictions on access to an Expressway to mask this fact. The Parish Mitigation Proposals provide Other Parties with an ALARP outcome at an affordable cost. Parishes further believe a benefit cost ratio (BCR) analysis as detailed in GG 104 would support the adoption of our proposals. Besides significantly improving safety within the villages the connections to the dual carriageway provide emergency access and egress as recommended by GD 368

(3) National Highways' conclusions on Human Health, Noise and Vibration highlights the mediocrity of the scheme as currently designed. North Curry and Stoke St Gregory, villages miles away from the direct impact of the scheme, are the sole identifiable beneficiaries. It is also damning that the Expressway will subject more residential properties to noise and vibration (813) than those benefiting from less (324). For the rest, National Highways can only point to a 'likely slight beneficial effect' on health across the local area, whilst ignoring the adverse impact on communities lying adjacent to the Expressway.

(4) The loss of historic accessibility to the A358 along Section 3 will necessitate long diversions along unclassified and C class rural lanes and roads. Experience to date is that these roads are poorly maintained by Somerset County Council, evidenced by pot holes, uncleared gullies, limited cutting of road hedges and verges. In autumn and winter the rural network is very dark, often muddy and slippery and in many places flooded or obstructed by pools of water. These issues already make the rural network precarious. The increased traffic volume, incompatibility of traffic types (cars, vans, lorries and agricultural vehicles) with each other and WCH uses will increase mental and physical stress on local communities. School runs will become more stressful. Businesses will be handicapped. Community severance will increase. The scheme does not consider in any depth these effects nor offers any mitigation of substance.

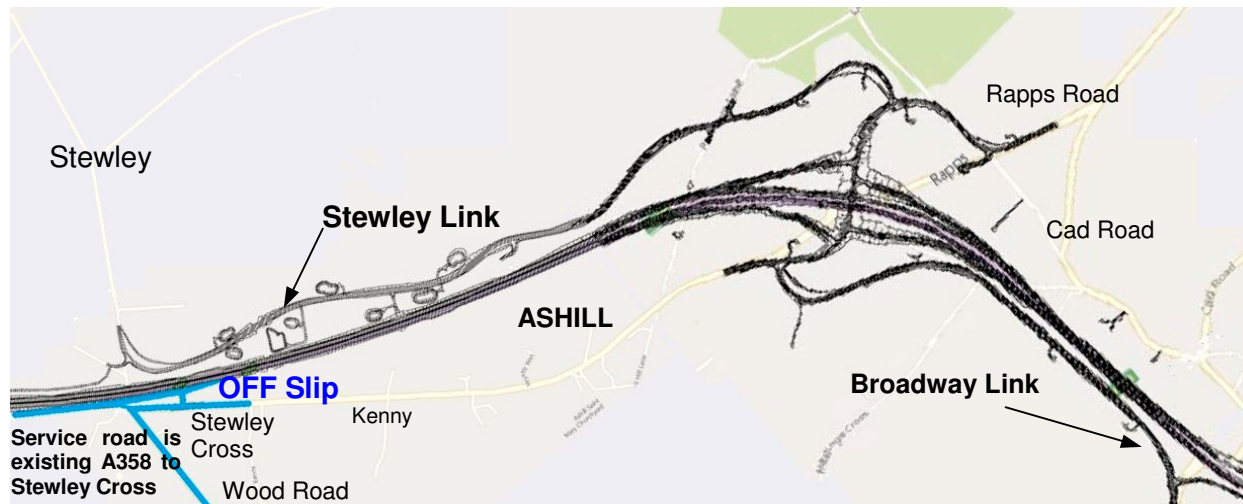
Section 4 - Ashill junction to Southfields roundabout

4a) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for the Ashill junction?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
			✓		

Reasons for response to 4a.

The junction is unnecessarily complicated taking up a large footprint and adversely impacting on the local environment. The route should be built as a trunk road link, with governing DMRB documents CD 109, CD 122, CD 123 and CD 116. Indeed, the 2019 SAR concluded that the route could be simplified if Expressway standards were not applied (SAR, 7.1.8). The 2007 Highways Agency design, shown below, indicates that if the Expressway ideology is dropped a simpler route and junction layout could be built.



Schematic Plan of Parish Proposal for Stewley Cross with off-slip



Highways Agency's 2007 design for Ashill Junction

4b) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for a parallel road on the eastern side of the A358 to connect Stewley with the Ashill junction and provide access to the A358?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
			✓		

Reasons for response to 4b.

The Stewley Link will have an inconsequential impact on the traffic through Ashill. Although the link would bring benefits to WCH users it will exacerbate severance of the Ashill parish and create difficulties for farmers working land both sides of the A358. Furthermore, the land required for the link is considerable, making at least one farmer's enterprise uncommercial. There is, therefore, a strong case for an overbridge at Kenny as proposed as part of the Preferred Route in the 2019 SAR.

4c) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for a parallel road on the western side of the A358 to connect Broadway Street and Thickthorn Lane with Ashill junction and provide access to the A358?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	✓				

Reasons for response to 4c.

(1) Support for this proposal is qualified.

(2) Broadway's current direct connection to the A358 is important to the village, not just as a means for villagers to travel for work, leisure and health reasons to local or more distant destinations, but for residents in the wider area, notably in Ilminster and to the east, to reach the services Broadway provides. These include the over 2,000 people registered with Broadway's Church View Medical Centre who live outside the parish, mainly in or near Ilminster, or the families of children attending Neroche Primary School who travel to the village during term time. The community objective from the outset has been to ensure that these important flows in and out of the village via Broadway Street are neither discouraged nor diverted to local roads in the village or via other communities in the area, like Horton and Ashill.

(3) The proposed link connecting Broadway Street and Thickthorn Lane to the proposed Ashill junction achieves some of this objective. Accordingly, there is support for National Highways' proposals for Broadway Street in this respect. However, National Highways' plans fail to provide direct access to Broadway off the A358 for eastbound traffic. Such traffic would have to use the less convenient Ashill junction, involving an

unrealistic additional 3.2 miles for a round trip from Southfields roundabout, twice the distance compared to the Suggs Lane route. There is significant local concern that those wishing to reach Broadway for medical, educational, social or employment purposes may be discouraged from doing so or would use the shorter route via Suggs Lane, which is totally unsuitable for increased levels of traffic.

(4) The solution to this problem is to provide an off-slip road for westbound A358 traffic at Broadway Street. National Highways' refusal to agree to this access is justified through its adoption of the GD300, Expressway standard, for the whole route. To date, no explanation has been provided as to why adoption of this standard is more relevant to the circumstances of the route than the standard adopted, for instance, for the Sparkford to Ilchester section of the A303 currently under construction. That section of the A303 will have slip roads of the type needed at Broadway Street.

(5) The path for walkers, cyclists and horse riders proposed between Broadway Street and Horton Cross via the abandoned A358 is strongly supported.

4d) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for Southfields roundabout?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
				✓	

Reasons for response to 4d.

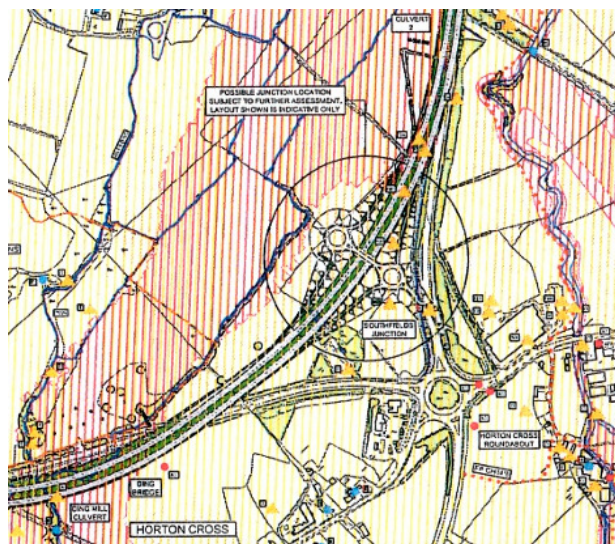
(1) The current route of the A358 (West) presents 2 significant problems for motorists. These are the congestion, pollution and safety issues at Henlade and the regular congestion experienced at Southfields roundabout. National Highways' proposals provide a solution to the first of these, but will make the second worse. In the process they also ignore at Southfields roundabout the engineering design standards they are imposing elsewhere along the route.

(2) Presently at Southfields roundabout, traffic on the A303 (East) Ilminster bypass travelling to Devon and Cornwall passes in front of the B3168 (Ilminster) before taking the A303 (West) towards Honiton. With this arrangement and with current levels of traffic, there is already congestion at peak and other times on all 5 approach legs of the roundabout. National Highways' proposal is to re-route the westbound A303 traffic around the roundabout towards Taunton and so across in front of 3 approach legs. In the process, and for the only time since the M3, this takes such traffic away from the geographically shortest route on the national highway network to Honiton and the South West. The result of this, combined with the major increases in traffic National Highways predict by the 2043 design year and the creation of 3 circulatory lanes rather than the present 2, will be to make traversing the roundabout more challenging for vehicles emerging from the B3168 (Ilminster), the A303 (West) and the A358 (South). That will result in increased congestion, particularly on the B3168 (Ilminster) and the A358 (South) approach legs. It also provides westbound A303 traffic with the opportunity to take the logical, shorter and presumably in future less busy A303 (West) route, defeating one of the purposes of the A358 improvement.

(3) Nor will the provision of a segregated left turn lane off the A358 (West) approach to the roundabout significantly improve matters. The diversion of traffic from the South West peninsular heading to the A303 (East) via junction 25 of the M5, coupled with the increases in traffic predicted

by National Highways, will substantially increase the number of vehicles approaching the roundabout. This, with the shortness of the segregated left-hand turn lane as it leaves the A358 (West) and joins the A303 (East) and the sharpness of the curve in the segregated lane, will cause congestion on that lane, potentially spilling back onto the A358 (West).

(4) The answer to these problems is to build a grade-separated junction at Southfields, separating long-distance from local traffic by providing a seamless connection between the A303 (East) and the A358 (West). Minimal changes would then be required to the roundabout and westbound traffic would be more easily encouraged to the M5 rather than the A303 (South). The Highways Agency has already proposed such an arrangement in 2007, as the graphic below shows:



(5) National Highways' refusal to agree to this not only condemns local communities in the area to even more congestion at the roundabout, but it also encourages rat-running along local roads for the foreseeable future. This has implications not considered by National Highways for communities like Donyatt and Sea. Significantly, as already explained in the answer to Question 1a, it also ignores the standards enshrined in GD300, which National Highways is imposing elsewhere on the route. National Highways' decision to build the route as a Level 2 Expressway requires junctions at either end to be grade-separated, as stated in E/6.9 of GD300. At Southfields, National Highways will not be meeting their own obligatory standards. In the absence of either justification or explanation, National Highways should revert to the grade-separated junction at Southfields for which plans already exist and for which local support is forthcoming.

(6) Instead of the limited changes proposed by National Highways at the roundabout, all the following design changes to the roundabout are essential were a grade-separated junction not to be provided.

A358 (West) traffic approaching the roundabout

As a strategic route in the national road network, it is anticipated that a high proportion of the traffic heading towards Southfields roundabout from the Taunton/M5 direction would use the proposed segregated left turn lane to head east onto the A303 (East) Ilminster bypass. Considering the speed reduction and consequent reduced traffic flow caused by the acuteness of the segregated lane curve at the roundabout, the following measures would help to alleviate the possibility of tailbacks on the dual carriageway:

- The addition of a significant length of auxiliary lane (similar to that shown in CD 122 Figure 3.30b Layout A option 2 - Single Lane auxiliary diverge) rather than the taper diverge currently proposed;
- The introduction of speed reduction measures for traffic approaching both the segregated left turn lane and the A358 approach to the roundabout;
- The introduction of real-time congestion warning signage.

A303 (East) Ilminster bypass traffic leaving the roundabout

For the same strategic reasons as mentioned above, a substantial length of parallel merge lane at the end of the segregated left turn lane should be introduced so that east-bound vehicles exiting Southfields roundabout itself can merge with the potentially dominant segregated left turn lane traffic up to and past the first right hand curve of the eastbound A303.

A303 (East) Ilminster bypass traffic approaching the roundabout

The proposed third approach lane at the roundabout would reintroduce the failed and subsequently amended original design of the roundabout. Additional speed reduction, improved signage and other safety measures should be implemented if this third approach lane were nonetheless to be implemented.

A358 (South) traffic approaching the roundabout

The proposed third approach lane should be converted into a segregated left turn lane so that all traffic joining the A358 (West) from Horton Cross can merge rather than giving way at the roundabout. National Highways should address the impact of a third lane on the safety of vehicles leaving and entering the services off the A358 (South) at this point.

Additional proposals at the roundabout

There is already significant congestion at peak times and other times on each of the approach legs to the roundabout. No significant physical change to the roundabout itself is proposed. However, the proposed creation of a third circulatory lane on parts of the roundabout would mean that traffic seeking to enter the roundabout from the B3168 (Ilminster) and A358 (South) approach legs would have to cross in front of 3 lanes of traffic rather than the current 2. This would create a significantly more challenging traverse of the roundabout for local vehicles than is currently

the case with a lower volume of traffic than National Highways project for the future. To cope with this, the following additional measures are needed at the roundabout.

- The permitted speed on the roundabout should be reduced from the current national speed limit to 40 mph, as is the case of the 40 mph limits at the South Petherton and Amesbury roundabouts on the A303.
- In order to give traffic from lower priority roads, namely the B3168 (Ilminster), the A303 (West) and the A358 (South), a safer and fairer opportunity to use the roundabout, traffic signals (either full-time or part-time) should be installed, as is already the case at Amesbury and Podimore roundabouts on the A303.
- Subject to the implementation of the first 2 proposals for the roundabout, the vertical profile of its central island comprising banks and foliage should be lowered so that traffic joining the roundabout has better visibility and consequently longer decision times, compensating to some extent for the increased volume of traffic from the A303 (East) joining the A358 (West) to Taunton/M5.

(7) To address a fundamental flaw in the scheme proposals, the opportunity should be taken to provide a grade-separated junction at Southfields, permitting A358 (West) and A303 (East) through-traffic to be separated from local traffic. Without this, the aim of reduced and consistent travel times will not be achieved, even if the design changes proposed above were to be implemented.

4e) Do you have any other comments about our plans for Section 4: Ashill junction to Southfields roundabout?

- (1) There is no evidence for an Expressway build standard. The 2019 SAR indicates the route should be built as a dual all-purpose trunk road.
- (2) HE SAR 2019 traffic data indicates that the closure of Cad Road/T junction would greatly increase traffic along Rapps Road. Much of this traffic is HGV to the two Ilton Business Parks and daily military convoys to and from Merryfield Airfield. The scheme proposal is inadequate to safely cope with this increased traffic load on a narrow country road. The current near balance in traffic along Rapps Road and Cad Road needs to be maintained by providing a single slip road from Cad Road/T junction on to the eastbound carriageway.
- (3) The width of the central reserve of the carriageway is excessive along the whole scheme but is particularly excessive on the approach to Southfields roundabout.

Improvements for walkers, cyclists and horse riders including disabled users

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and disabled users, including our plans to make use of the local road network and new off-road routes to create a cycle route from Henlade to Southfields roundabout?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	✓				

Reasons for response to 5.

- (1) The objective to enhance the facilities for WCH is fully supported.
- (2) Should the Capland link not be built, the alternative scheme proposal to provide a bridleway connecting Village Road South to Capland Lane should be expanded to include a cycle path. This would open up an alternative cycling option from Village Road to Ashill junction.
- (3) National Highways reports that there is one large adverse impact to a bridleway where the route will be stopped up, with a further 15 routes experiencing moderate adverse effects as a result of longer journey times as a result of permanent diversions. This conclusion means the scheme fails the GD 300 requirement that WCH facilities should be at least as good as they were and that WCHs should not be disadvantaged by the building of an Expressway (GD 300, E/3.10.1 and E/3.10.3). It also means the scheme fails one of its primary objectives.

Planning ahead to construction

- 6)** Please let us know if you have any comments on our proposals for construction, including the proposed phasing. No comment.

The Environment

- 7)** Please let us know if you have any comments on the information presented in the Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report.

- (1) With the exception of Henlade air quality is generally good in the area. Because the area is rural the large footprint of the Expressway is likely to have a permanent significant adverse effect on the Vale of Taunton Deane and North Curry Sandstone Ridge landscapes and will adversely impact on views across these landscapes (Table 16.1). Minimising the environmental impact of the scheme points to minimising the scheme footprint, which in turn points to a non-Expressway standard dual carriageway.
- (2) Since the scheme inception in 2014, the environmental issue of climate change has risen to prominence. The 2014 ideology of building big may now be out of step with current thinking of building small, the phasing out of petrol and diesel cars, and nudging seasonal travellers to alternatives like rail.

General

8) Do you have any other comments you would like to make about our proposals?

Refer to Principal Issues at front of questionnaire response.

* Illustrations are solely to assist explanation of requirements.

It is important that you submit your feedback by 23:59 on Monday 22 November 2021.

Questionnaires received after this time may not be considered.

Data protection

On 25 May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) became law. The law requires National Highways to explain to you – consultees, stakeholders and customers – how your personal data will be used and stored. National Highways adheres to the government's consultation principles, the Planning Act 2008 as required, and may collect personal data to help shape development of highways schemes. Personal data collected by the project team will be processed and retained by National Highways and its appointed contractors until the scheme is complete.

Under the GDPR regulations you have the following rights:

- Right of access to the data (Subject Access Request)
- Right for the rectification of errors
- Right to erasure of personal data – this is not an absolute right under the legislation
- Right to restrict processing or to object to processing
- Right to data portability

If, at any point, National Highways plans to process the personal data we hold for a purpose other than that for which it was originally collected, we will tell you what that other purpose is. We will do this prior to any further processing taking place and we will include any relevant additional information, including your right to object to that further processing. You have the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority, the Information Commissioners Office.

If you'd like more information about how we manage data, or a copy of our privacy notice, please contact:

DataProtectionAdvice@highwaysengland.co.uk