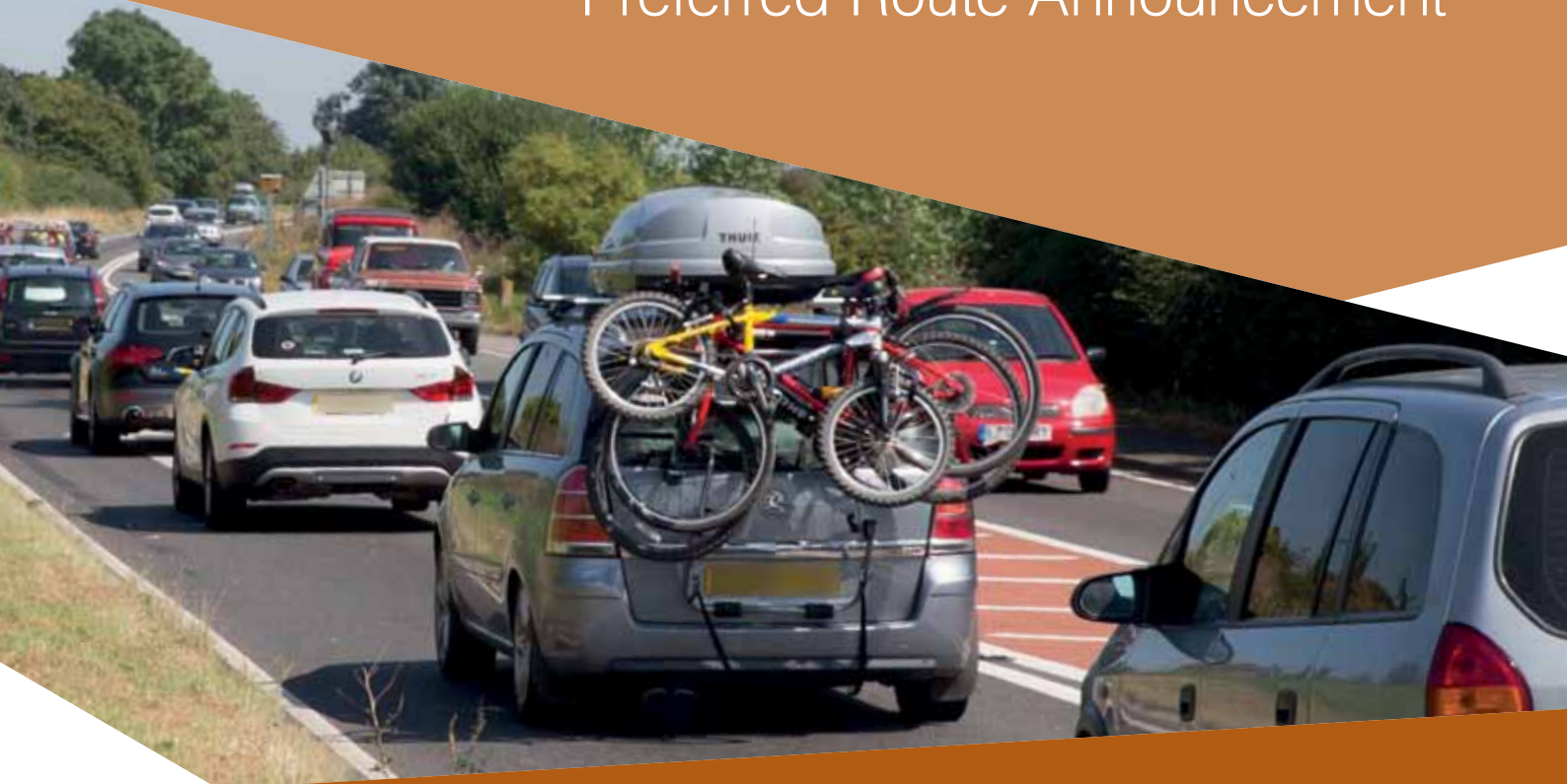


A303

Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling Scheme
Preferred Route Announcement



About this booklet

This booklet presents the preferred route for the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester dualling scheme and a summary of how the consultation we carried out in early 2017 influenced it.

The booklet does not set out every consultation response we received, nor address every issue that was raised. For a complete analysis and detailed response to consultation feedback, please see the Report on Public Consultation and our post-consultation Scheme Assessment Report. Both are available online at www.highways.gov.uk/Sparkford-to-Ilchester together with a range of other useful documents.



A303/A358 route corridor schemes

1. A358 Taunton to Southfields
2. A303 Sparkford to Ilchester
3. A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down



Scheme background

The Government's Road Investment Strategy, published in December 2014, sets out the vision for the strategic road network and includes a commitment to upgrade the route from the M3 motorway to the M5 at Taunton to dual carriageway standard, including the section of the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester.

The existing A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester comprises a mix of dual and single carriageway and suffers from traffic congestion and long delays. Up to 26,000 vehicles use the

single carriageway section of the existing A303 on a normal day. As well as being the principal route between London and the south east to the south west, the A303 is the main road for road users living and working in local towns including Ilchester and Yeovil as well as other smaller communities along the way.

Improvements are needed to this section of the A303 to improve journey times, reduce congestion and decrease the number of accidents. Without improvement, the performance of the route will deteriorate, congestion and delays will increase and road access will be an ever-bigger barrier to economic growth and prosperity.



The consultation

We held our public consultation on the route options between 14 February and 29 March 2017. We invited the local community, landholders, businesses, road users and key stakeholders to provide feedback on the route options presented.

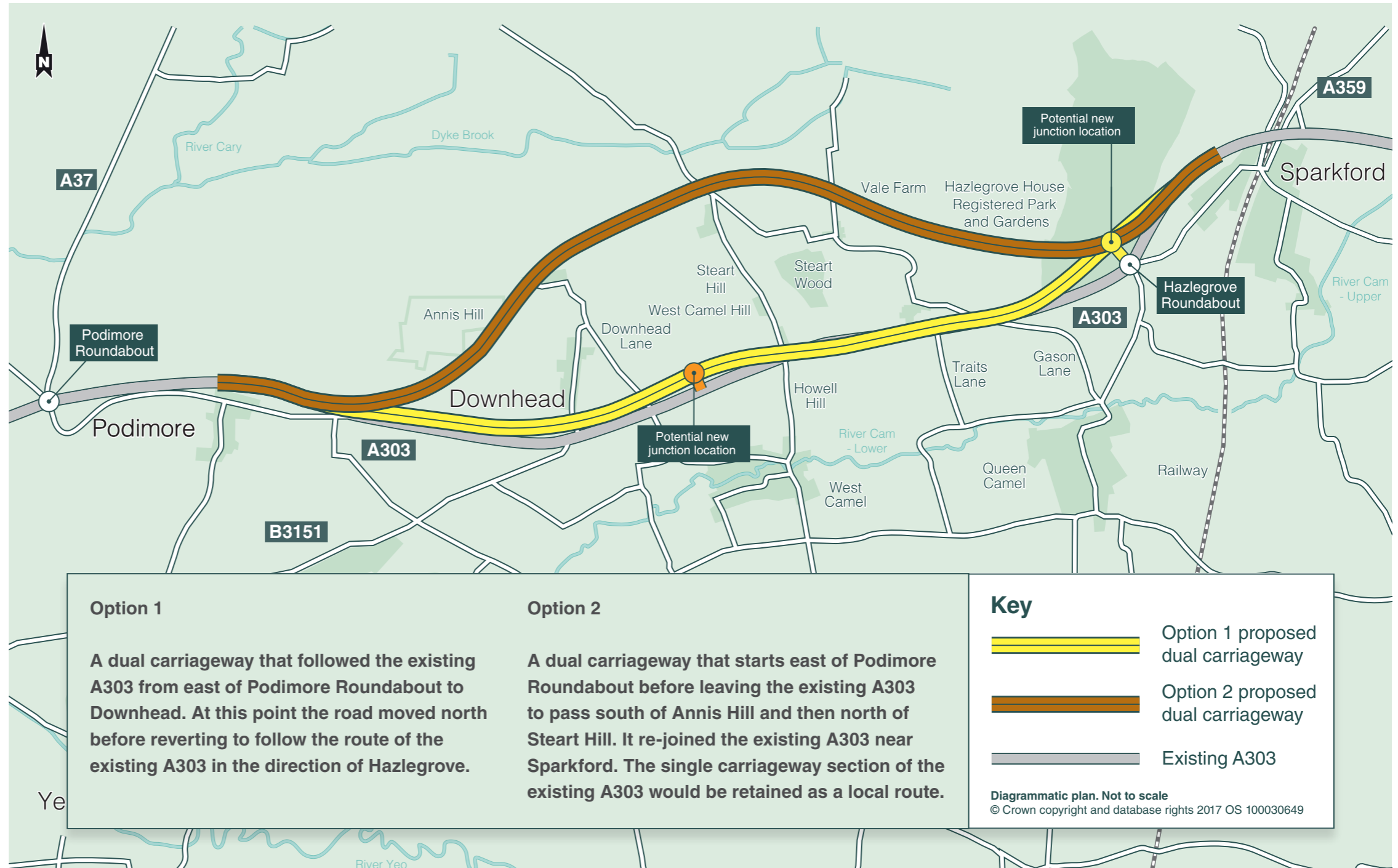
As part of the public consultation we held a launch event for local politicians and community leaders, 2 landowner events and 4 public information events. We publicised the public consultation through 3,297 letters sent to addresses in the local area, local media coverage and information published on our website. We also contacted key stakeholders including local authorities and other statutory bodies to seek their views on the proposals. We produced a consultation brochure and questionnaire that, along with other related public consultation material, were available online and at designated public information points.



Routes presented at public consultation

We presented 2 options at the public consultation that will deliver against the scheme objectives to:

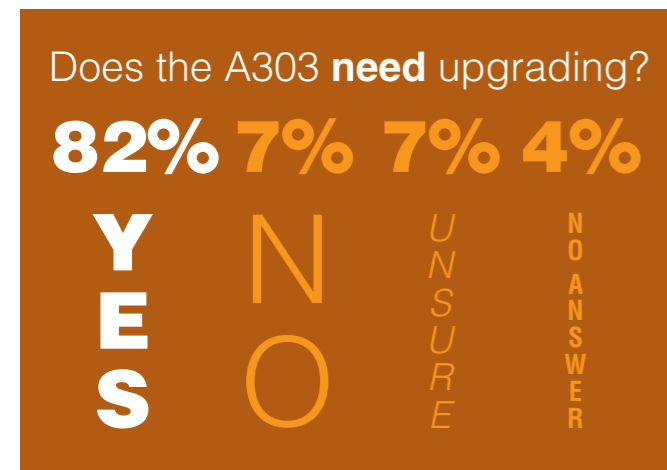
- relieve traffic congestion on a vital link to the south west
- provide more reliable journey times
- improve safety and reducing driver stress by providing a more free-flowing network
- provide safer local access provisions for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users
- support the local economy to grow through the creation of a modernised and reliable road that reduces delays and makes the south west more accessible for tourism and business
- improve the environment by reducing pollution from queuing traffic, particularly during the busy summer months



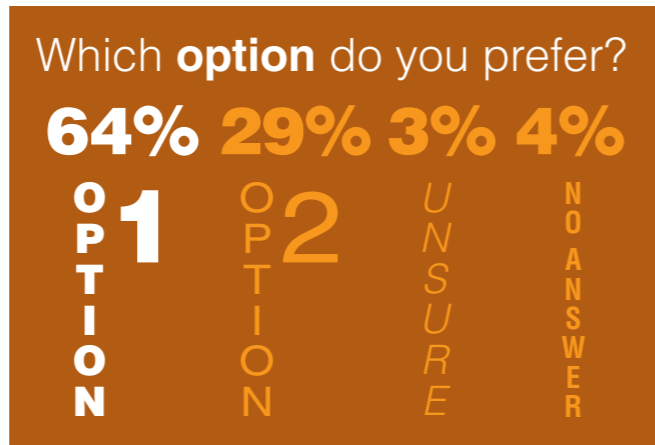
What you told us

A total of 735 stakeholders attended the public events and we received 1,237 questionnaire responses. We have read and considered every response and comment you gave us. Some of your comments related to design, which is the next stage of the process. Please be assured that these will be considered when we reach that stage.

82% of people generally agreed that something should be done to address the problems on the A303. The responses show overwhelming support for the principle of the scheme and significant majority support for Option 1.



82% supported an upgrade of the route



64% chose Option 1 as their preferred route

A copy of the full consultation report can be found on the scheme website, www.highways.gov.uk/Sparkford-to-Ilchester

Your comments

Key issues raised through the public consultation included:

- flooding
- the impact on the open countryside and visual impact, particularly in relation to Option 2
- access for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians
- the impact on the local community
- the impact of a junction on the registered park and garden at Hazlegrove House

Feedback also included suggestions for:

- Hazlegrove junction
- Downhead Lane junction
- crossing points at road level on the A303
- the upgrading of Podimore junction
- a new road linking the Podimore Roundabout with RNAS Yeovilton
- provision of animal crossings



Our response

Following the public consultation, we have used the feedback submitted to refine the possible route alignments and junction layouts.

Several junction arrangements have been considered for Hazlegrove junction, balancing the demands of predicted traffic flow, with the

views of the local authority conservation officer, other stakeholders and environmental bodies. In addition, the Downhead junction proposal has been examined in some detail, including whether a junction is required at this location at all. The Podimore junction is outside the scope of this particular project.



Selection of the preferred route

Following the public consultation, we have continued to develop the options taking into account comments and issues raised during the consultation. This has included looking at what measures are needed to offset any impact the scheme may have on the environment and local communities.

When selecting the preferred route, we considered a number of factors, including:

- scheme objectives
- safety
- benefits
- costs
- environmental effects
- construction
- public consultation feedback

Having assessed all the relevant issues and analysed the feedback, we have concluded that Option 1 would provide the best performing route overall.

We have selected Option 1 as it:

- minimises land-take
- minimises construction in an unspoilt rural setting as the route follows the existing corridor very closely
- is preferred by stakeholders and most of the local community as it has less impact on biodiversity
- is the shortest of the 2 options so will provide the best journey time

The announcement of our preferred route will allow land required for the construction of the scheme to be protected from development.

The preferred route

The preferred route includes:






- a 70mph high quality dual carriageway
- a new junction built on two-levels at Hazlegrove
- a potential new junction at Downhead
- a new overbridge at Steart Hill
- a new underbridge at Traits Lane

Following the consultation we have moved the proposed new dual carriageway section between Podimore and Downhead Lane to the south slightly to align with the existing single carriageway section.

The potential junction at Downhead would provide a connection to and from the eastbound carriageway near Downhead Lane, which can be accessed from roads to the south of the new dual carriageway via the proposed overbridge at Steart Hill.



Key

-  Proposed dual carriageway
-  Existing A303
-  Potential new bridge
-  Potential new underpass
-  Potential junction

Diagrammatic plan. Not to scale
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What happens next?

We will develop the details of the preferred route and give you another chance to comment on these before we submit our proposal for development consent.

Between now and then, we will continue to refine and further develop the design and undertake more surveys, including geotechnical, topographical and environmental surveys.



Explaining the Development Consent Order (DCO) process



The next public consultation

Our next consultation will be statutory, which means it is required by law.

In this case the law is the Planning Act 2008. The consultation is planned for early 2018 and will focus on detailed proposals for the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester scheme.



The Development Consent Order process

The scheme is classed as a **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008.**

As such, we are required to make an application for a Development Consent Order to obtain permission to construct the scheme. We currently intend to make our application by summer 2018. More information about the Development Consent Order process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website:
<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

How to find out more:

You can find out more information about the need to upgrade the A303 corridor and the full report of our 2017 consultation on our website:

www.highways.gov.uk/Sparkford-to-Ilchester

Contact us:

The project team can be contacted by:



emailing us at:

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writing to us at:

**A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Project Team,
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2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6HA**



calling us on:

0300 123 5000

Notes: 

If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

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