

A31 Ringwood Improvements Consultation Report

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Revision 3

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Executive Summary

The development of improvements to the A31 at Ringwood was announced as part of the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) 2015-2020, published by the Department for Transport (DfT) in December 2014. The improvements were described as “widening of the A31 at Ringwood to three lanes, providing more capacity for local traffic using the road to cross the Avon, plus adjustments to the nearby local road network to allow for improvements for pedestrians in Ringwood.”

Proposed scheme

The primary objectives of the scheme are to reduce congestion and improve journey times, improve safety along the A31, and improve facilities for cyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorised users on the footway along the A31 and in Ringwood town centre. The A31 Ringwood Improvement consultation put forward one option, which included the widening of the A31 Westbound and the closure of the West Street access to the A31.

Public consultation

The public consultation provides an important opportunity for Highways England to understand the views of the local residents, businesses and road users and to use these views to help shape the scheme. The consultation was conducted over a six-week period from June 23 to August 4 2017.

The purpose of this consultation report is to summarise the key responses, opinions and outcomes from the consultation. This report will not summarise the final decision, however the outcomes of the consultation will influence the recommendation publicised in the Preferred Route Announcement (PRA) for the scheme which is expected in Autumn 2017. This report includes quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results of the questionnaire from the consultation. Below is a summary of the key outcomes, views and issues from the consultation.

Key outcomes

Overall there was strong support for improvements to be made to this section of the A31. Most respondents strongly agreed with the proposed option with most agreeing the scheme would achieve its objectives. Some of the key concerns currently experienced on the A31 include the unpredictable journey times on the A31, as well as the safety of all users. Respondents also felt there was a need to upgrade/consider cycling and pedestrian facilities.

Various concerns were raised regarding the proposed scheme, including some concerns with the closure of West Street and potential impacts on congestion within the local town centre. Many respondents also requested a reduction in the speed limit on the A31 to improve flow of traffic and safety concerns. Access to and from the Petrol Filling Station (PFS) was raised as an issue, with requests to move, improve or close this facility. Other concerns raised included the potential environmental impacts (in particular noise and air quality) and the need to mitigate these if required, as well as the need to address other known areas of congestion in the area such as at Poulner Hill and Hightown Hill.

These and other comments received during the consultation are outlined in this report, including a response to the issues raised. The feedback from the consultation will feed into the ongoing development of the scheme including assessments and detailed design.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the scheme

The A31 is a vital section of road that connects Bournemouth and the south coast. At peak times the road becomes congested at the Ringwood junction. This results in queues on the A31 westbound and through Ringwood on the B3347 south of the A31.

Highways England is proposing improvements to the A31 at Ringwood to improve congestion on the road network. The improvement scheme also considers the merging of traffic from West Street, the petrol filling station and the Fish Inn pub exit onto the A31 which is a known safety issue.

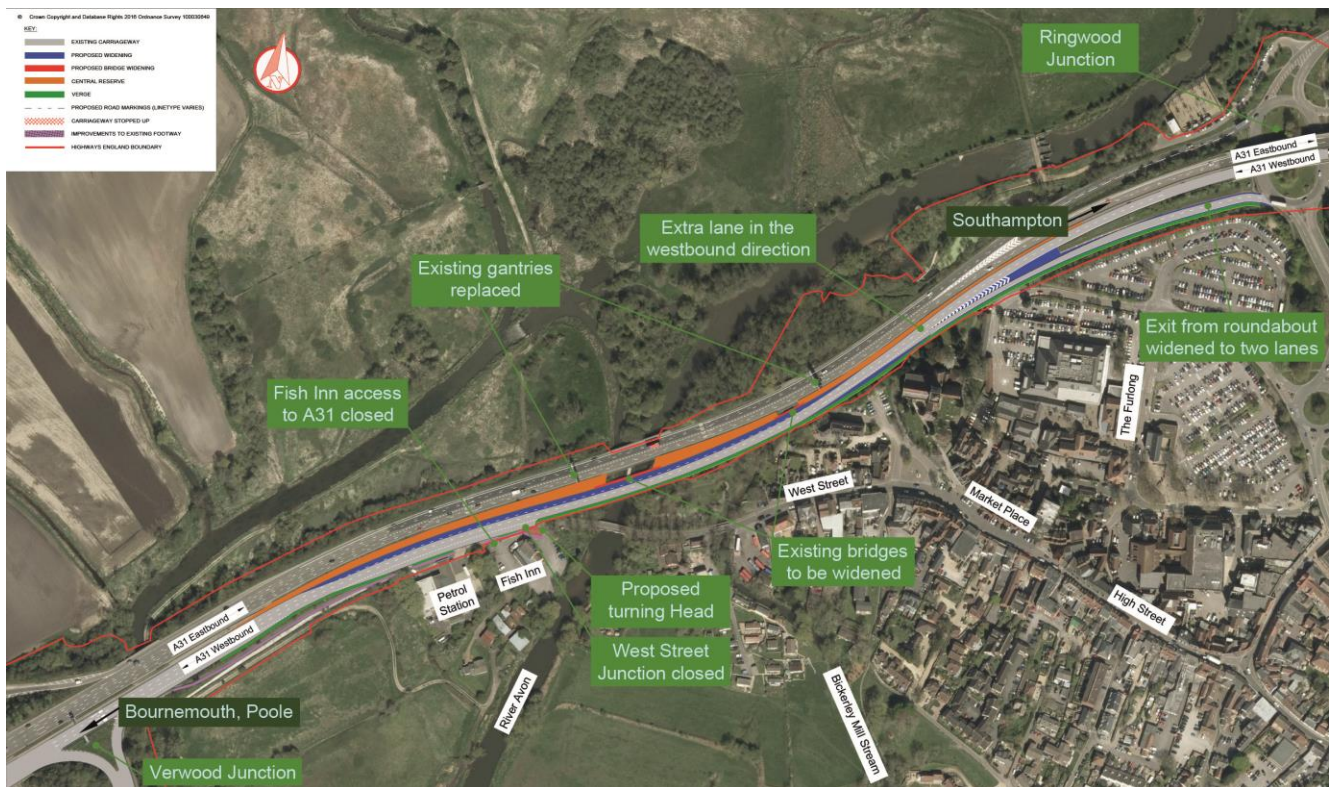


Figure 1 Option 1 proposal

The proposed improvements will smooth the flow of traffic and improve journey times by reducing average delays. Highways England has developed the following project objectives:

- **Reduce congestion and improve journey times** on the A31 westbound between the Ringwood junction and the Verwood junction.
- **Improve safety** along the A31, particularly at the junction with West Street.
- **Improve facilities for cyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorised users** on the footway alongside the A31 and in Ringwood town centre.

1.2 Background to the consultation

Highways England developed three options that could meet the project objectives as outlined in Section 1.1.

Option 1 is described in Table 1 below. Options 2 and 3 would maintain West Street access onto the A31. Option 2 would also introduce traffic calming measures along West Street and High Street to deter traffic using the West Street access, whereas Option 3 would not implement traffic calming.

Following the completion of Stage 1, Options 2 and 3 were rejected on the basis that they did not meet the core objective of improving safety. Details of the rejected schemes and the reason for those options being discounted were set out in the consultation brochure (see Appendix A).

The proposed improvement scheme, Option 1, is summarised in Table 1. Figure 1 above also provides a visual explanation of the proposal. The A31 Ringwood improvement scheme was consulted on between 23 June and 4 August 2017 to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders and members of the public to view and make comment on the proposals.

Table 1 Option 1 proposal

Scheme Element	Description
Addition of a third lane westbound on the A31	This extra lane would be westbound on the off-side, to the right of the existing carriageway utilising part of the existing central reserve and will be approximately one kilometre (0.6 miles) in length. This would relieve the existing bottleneck, where traffic slows down or comes to a stop on this section of the A31.
Closure of West Street access to A31	Currently there is a safety issue where traffic joins the A31 from West Street. To reduce the number of incidents at the junction we propose to close West Street where it meets the A31. A turning point would be provided for vehicles at the end of West Street.
Improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians	Option 1 will include improvements to existing footway along A31. Working with Ringwood Town Council, Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council, we will be looking to improve facilities for non-motorised users in Ringwood.

1.3 Purpose of the report

The report sets out how the consultation was delivered and provides a summary of the responses received, as well as how these responses are taken into account. This report presents the summary of:

- How the public were informed of the public consultation events;
- How the option identified was presented at the public consultation;
- The responses received from the statutory stakeholders and public during the public consultation period; and
- The consideration of the consultation responses and how these have been taken into account.

2 Approach to consultation

The public consultation was launched on the 23 June 2017 and closed on 4 August 2017. As part of the public consultation period, two events were held where details of the proposal were displayed and visitors could speak directly to members of the project team about the proposal. Table 2 shows the public events, which were held, and the number of visitors attending.

Table 2.1. Event details

Date	Venue	Time	Attendance
Friday 30 June 2017	Ringwood Town Council, The Furlong, Ringwood	15:00 – 20:00	141
Saturday 1 July 2017	Ringwood Town Council, The Furlong, Ringwood	10:00 – 16:00	170

2.1 Consultation materials

Consultation brochure

The brochure was the central source of information for the consultation. It contained information on the scheme background, a summary of the option that was being consulted on, details on the two rejected options, the objectives and the benefits of the scheme. The consultation brochure can be found in Appendix A.

The consultation brochures and questionnaires were distributed at the events and were also available at multiple drop-off locations, shown below:

- Ringwood Town Council office
- New Forest District Council office
- Ringwood Library
- Ringwood Health & Leisure Centre
- Service Area at Picket Post

Questionnaire

The brochure also included a questionnaire to enable anyone with an interest in the scheme to provide comments on the different aspects of our proposals. The questionnaire was used to gather views and opinions of key stakeholders about the proposed option for the A31 Ringwood Improvement scheme. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

The questionnaire used a combination of open and closed questions.

The closed questions were aimed at trying to establish who used the A31, when and why. They also covered the scheme objectives, the key issues experienced on the A31 and questions on the closure

of West Street access onto the A31. The final question was an open question, offering respondents the opportunity to make any further comments about the proposals and other issues related to the proposal.

Respondents could submit their responses either by the Freepost address, the online questionnaire or by email. This questionnaire was also used to help assess how successful the consultation was and how to improve engagement in the future.

Consultation website

A dedicated website for the scheme consultation was available via Citizen Space, this can be found at: www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood

The website included all scheme background details as well as a link to the online questionnaire and downloadable PDF versions of the brochure and questionnaire.

Exhibition boards

Exhibition boards were produced and displayed at the events. The boards showed key information on the objectives of the scheme, what the proposal was, environmental considerations, what happens after the consultation and how to respond to the consultation.

Copies of the exhibition boards can be found in Appendix C.

Traffic modelling video

A traffic modelling video was also produced and displayed at the events. This compared the traffic movements within the scheme boundaries with and without the proposed option being implemented.

This video was also published on the A31 Ringwood Scheme website for those who could not attend the events: www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood

Screenshots from the video are included in Appendix D.

2.2 Promotion of the consultation

The consultation was promoted through a variety of different channels to raise awareness of the consultation period, events and the approach to providing comments and consultation responses.

Table 2.2. Event details

Channel	Description
Letter	Almost 1000 letters were sent out to selected post codes in the immediate vicinity of the scheme in order to make people aware of the consultation and when the public events would be. The post codes were selected due to their proximity to the proposed scheme. An additional letter was issued to residents and businesses along West Street, as the proposal would directly impact them due to proposed closure of West Street.
Meeting with West Street businesses	Meetings were also arranged with key stakeholders likely to be directly impacted by the proposed scheme. Meetings were organised with local businesses on West Street, The Fish Inn, the bus depot and the bus

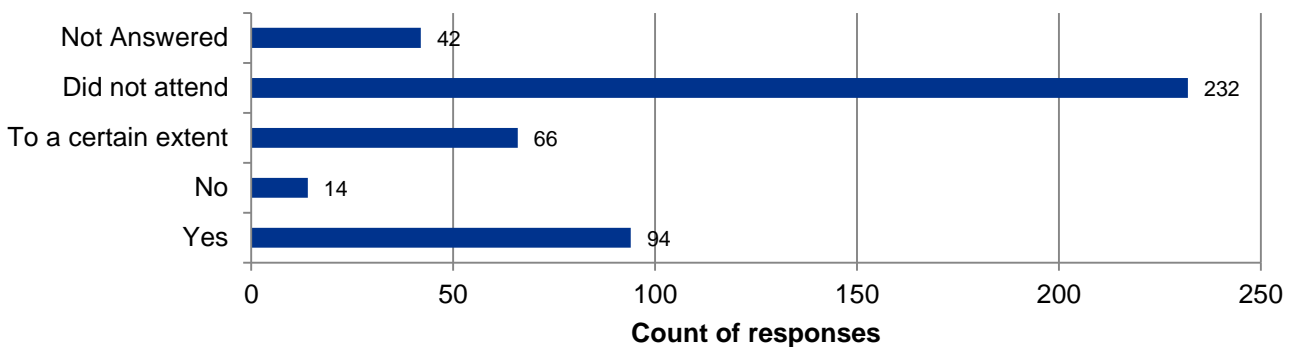
	<p>garage in order to inform them about the consultation because they would be directly impacted by the closure of West Street. Meetings were also held with Ringwood Town Council, New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council.</p> <p>Letters were posted and/or hand delivered to all the local businesses along West Street up to Market Place to inform them of the upcoming consultation. A copy of this letter can be found in Appendix E labelled “West Street Businesses letter”.</p>
<p>Online Advertising</p>	<p>Online Advertising</p> <p>Events were publicised on the dedicated website www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood throughout the consultation period.</p> <p>The website contained the dates of the events and all the materials such as the consultation brochure and questionnaire. It also provided a link to the questionnaire that could be completed online.</p>
<p>Social Media</p>	<p>Twitter was also used during the consultation period to promote the consultation and encourage people to submit their feedback through the provided avenues (see below).</p>
<p>Advertisement Campaign</p>	<p>The consultation was advertised in the Bournemouth Echo on 23 June.</p> <p>Please see Appendix F for a copy of the advertisement.</p> <p>A press release was also put up on the Government website: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/a31-ringwood-improvement-plans-go-on-show</p>



2.3 Effectiveness of consultation

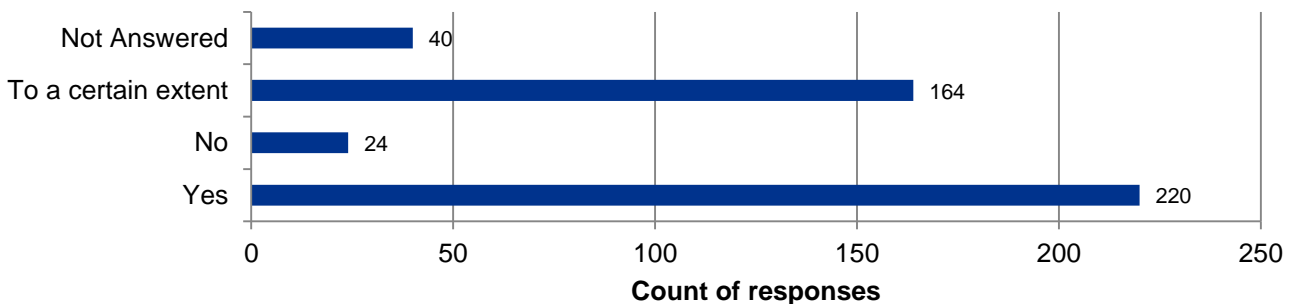
The consultation questionnaire contained a series of questions asking respondents to explain how they found out about the consultation and how they interacted with the consultation events. The below section outlines the results from this part of the consultation, demonstrating whether or not respondents felt the consultation was effective.

Q15. Did you find the public exhibition useful in answering your questions?



406 people responded to this question. The data from Question 15 demonstrates how a majority of those who responded to the consultation did not attend the public events. However, of those who did attend, a majority found the public exhibition useful in helping to answer queries, or to a certain extent.

Q16. Have you found the consultation materials useful in answering your questions?



Out of 408 respondents to Question 16, most found the consultation useful in answering their questions or felt that it was helpful to an extent. A small number of respondents raised comments through Question 14 of the questionnaire regarding some concerns about the quality of information provided within the consultation materials as well as a concern that consultation comments are taken into account.

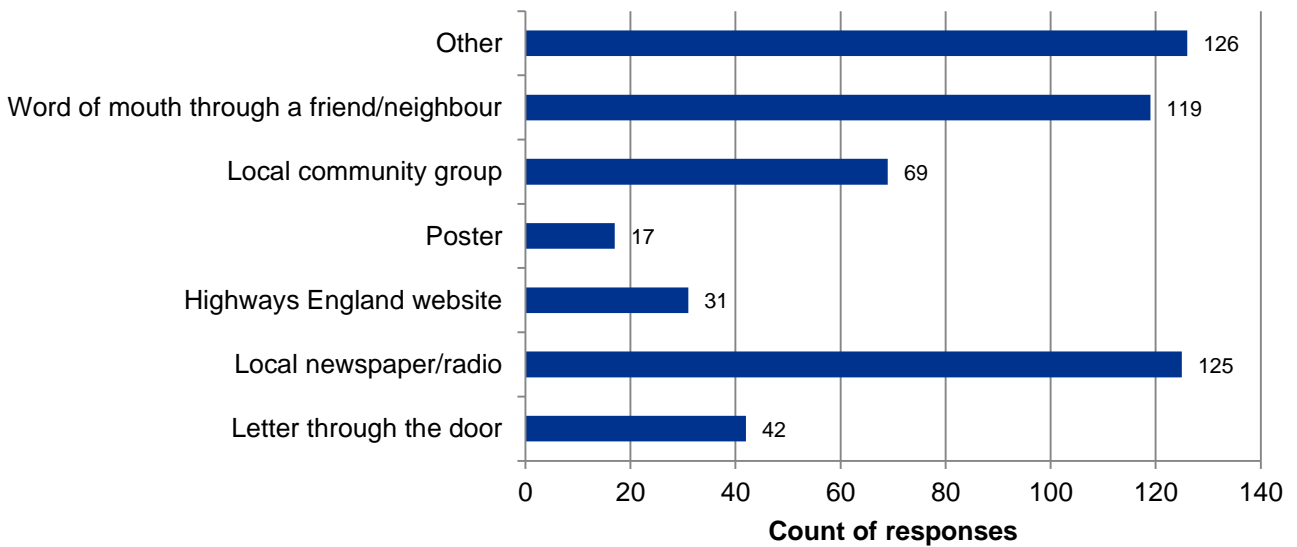
“I think that it is also very unhelpful, and unbalanced not to have included the reasons considered for not closing the petrol station, in the proposal.”

– Respondent Reference A31R070

Highways England response: We hold our consultations at stages in the scheme where we are able to provide sufficient information about our proposals as well as at an early enough stage in the scheme

that comments received can be taken into account and fed into the design process as applicable. We outline in Section 3 the process by which we consider consultation responses and how this has fed into the production of this report. All responses received are given due consideration and we provide in this report some response to the issues raised as part of this consultation.

Q17. How did you find out about the A31 Ringwood public consultation?



This graph highlights how respondents found out about the consultation through a variety of channels. Many found out about the consultation through local newspaper or radio, closely followed by word of mouth. Most respondents found out through other channels, the majority of which were through social media (in particular Twitter and Facebook groups) as well as other websites (such as Ringwood Town Council) and from the local library or council offices drop-off locations.

3 Analysis methodology

The A31 Ringwood Improvements consultation was open from 23 June to 4 August 2017. In this time, 448 responses were received. Table 3.1 below outlines the number of responses received.

Table 3.1. Count of responses received by type

Response type	Count
Online questionnaire	247
Paper questionnaire	183
Email or letter	18

Once responses were received, these were processed and analysed through the following stages. These are discussed in further detail below.

- Receipt of responses and digitalisation of all responses
- Processed using a coding and analytical framework
- Reporting

3.1 Digitalisation of responses

Responses received via our online platform (Citizen Space) were automatically and securely logged onto a database. All paper copies of the questionnaire were logged upon receipt, scanned, and the data was manually uploaded to the Citizen Space database. All responses received by email were also logged and uploaded.

3.2 Development of a coding and analytical framework

As noted in Section 2.1.1, the questionnaire consisted of a range of closed and open questions, allowing respondents to provide set responses as well as free-written comments. Closed questions can be analysed in a quantitative manner, using the raw data received to determine how many respondents selected set answers. The outputs of this analysis are set out in Sections 4.1 to 4.5.

Analysis of 'open text' is undertaken by a process of coding, through which comments are categorised and grouped under different codes. Each code represents a different issue or viewpoint, and can therefore be used to gain a robust understanding of the range of concerns and views raised, as well as how often these are raised across all respondents.

To enable the analysis of responses and the reporting, we theme the codes to outline the high-level topics. The codes within each theme then outline the more detailed issues. The themes used in the coding framework are set out in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2. List of coding themes for the A31 Ringwood improvements consultation

Coding theme
Connectivity
Construction
Cost
Environment
Existing condition / situation
Highways and design
Local growth and development
Safety
Traffic and transport
Other

As the coding process progresses, we developed an overarching view of the range and depth of issues, concerns and viewpoints raised during the consultation. The coding framework was updated as new issues emerged until all responses had been coded.

3.3 Reporting

Based on the coding and analysis of comments made during the consultation, this report summarises the issues raised by all respondents.

The structure of the report follows the structure of the questionnaire, with additional sections added to cover the themes which emerged from the coding process (see Table 3.2). Quotes from respondents are used where applicable to provide examples of the types of comments made with regards to a particular issue. All quotes remain anonymous.

Sections 4.1 to 4.5 of this report cover the closed questions from the questionnaire based on travel habits, the need for improvements, understanding of the rejected options, scheme objectives and the closure of West Street access onto the A31.

Sections 4.6 to 4.12 cover the issues raised as part of Question 14 of the questionnaire asking for any general comments or observations on the proposed scheme.

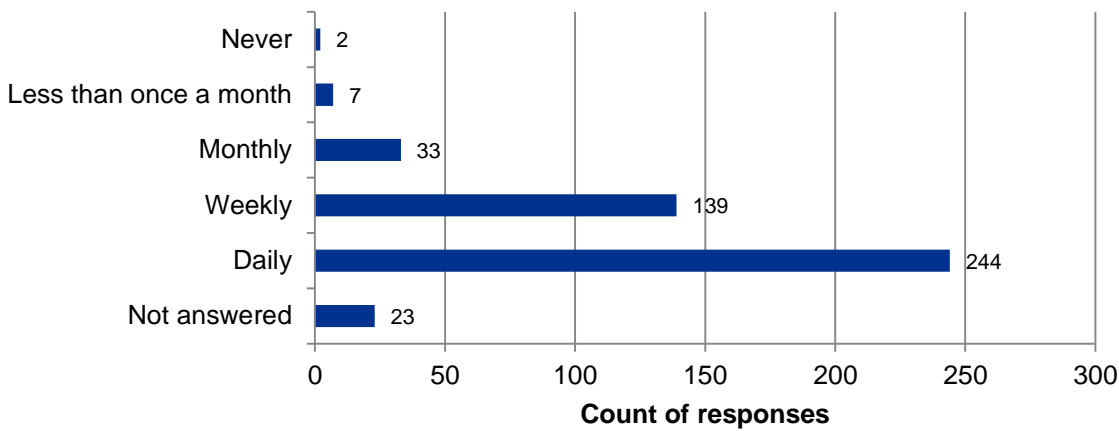
Section 5 provides a summary and conclusions of the issues noted by respondents.

4 Outputs of the consultation

4.1 Travel habits and use of the A31 Ringwood junction

The consultation questionnaire included a series of questions to help us understand how respondents currently use the A31 Ringwood junction. This section addresses responses to Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 which, which asked respondents about their travel habits and use of the A31 Ringwood junction.

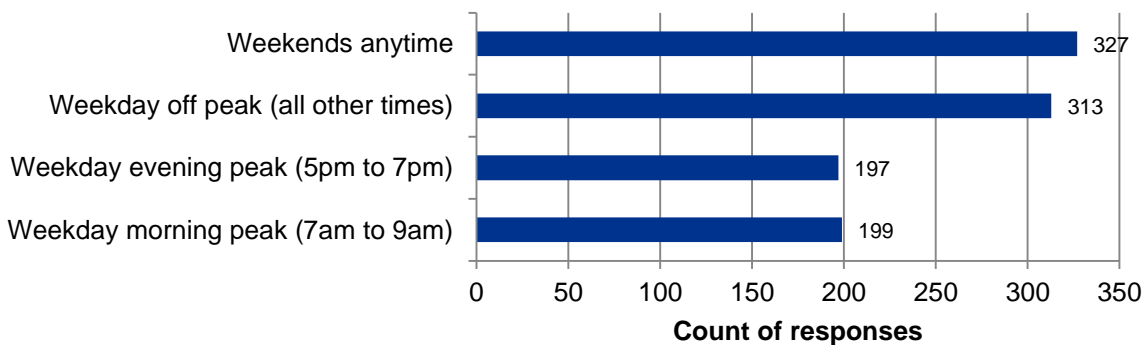
Q1. How often do you currently use the A31 between Ringwood and Verwood junction?



A total of 425 people responded to Question 1, which asked consultees how often they used the A31. A majority of respondents noted that they used the A31 between Ringwood and Verwood junctions on a daily basis, with many respondents also using it weekly.

Q2. When do you usually travel?

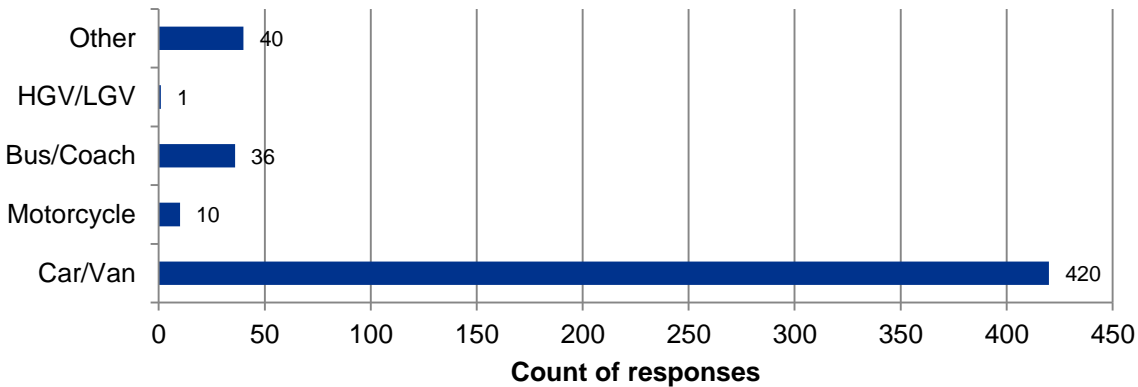
Respondents were asked to clarify when they would usually travel on the A31 between Ringwood and Verwood junction, giving them the option of weekday peak time (morning and evening), weekday off-peak times and weekends. Respondents could tick as many options as applicable.



The responses show that more respondents stated that they used the A31 at off peak times during the weekdays and at weekends. However, many respondents also use the A31 at peak times on week days.

Q3. How do you normally travel on the route?

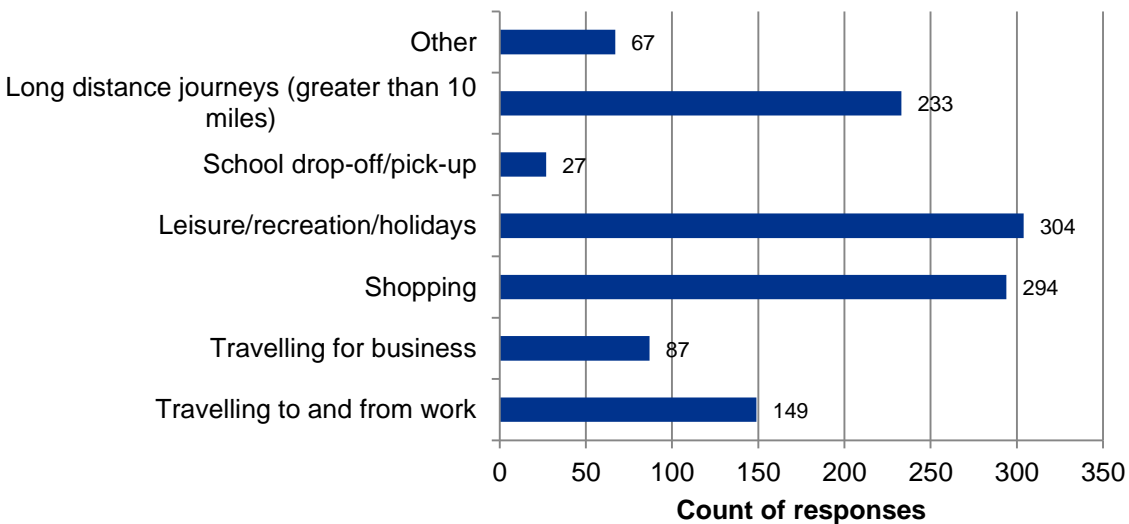
Respondents were asked how they usually travel on the route, including by car/van, motorcycle, bus and other means of transport. Respondents could tick as many options as applicable.



A vast majority of respondents use the route by car or van. Other modes of transport noted by respondents included several who walk or cycle the route, as well as some users who use tractors.

Q4. What do you usually use the A31 Ringwood for?

Respondents were asked to provide the reasons for which they use the A31 Ringwood junction, such as business or personal reasons. Respondents could tick as many options as applicable.



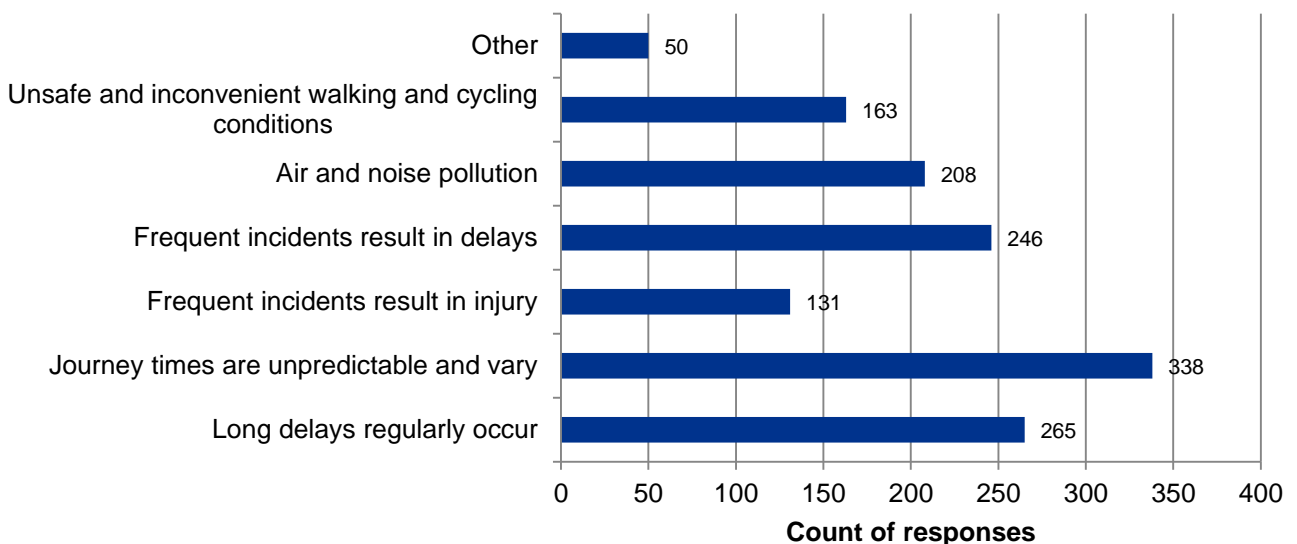
A majority of respondents use the A31 Ringwood junction for leisure, recreation or holidays as well as shopping. Many respondents also stated that they use the road for long-distance journeys. Other reasons for using the road included visiting family and friends, and attending local appointments such as doctors and dentists appointments.

4.2 Need for improvements at the A31 Ringwood junction

The questionnaire also included a series of questions to help us understand whether respondents felt there was a need for improvement at the A31 Ringwood junction. This section addresses responses to Questions 5, 6, 7 and 8, which asked respondents about their travel experiences and whether they agreed with the need for the proposed improvements. This section is also supported by comments raised within Question 14 around the existing situation and conditions on the A31.

Q5. Do you think any of the following apply to your current travel conditions on the A31 at Ringwood?

Respondents were asked, out of the options provided, which statements they felt applied to the current travel conditions on the A31 at Ringwood. Respondents could select as many of the choices as they desired. The selection also included an “other” option, where any additional comments or observations could be addressed by respondents.



“Journey times are unpredictable and vary” was the most selected option with a total of 338 votes. The second largest concern was “long delays regularly occur” with 265 votes and “frequent incidents result in delays” (246) following close in significance. Those who specified “other” issues drew attention to the design of the slip roads along the A31 and the danger of drivers changing lanes at the last minute.

As part of Question 14 of the questionnaire, several respondents commented on the existing conditions on the A31 Ringwood junction. Many respondents highlighted the significant delays and congestion, as also noted from Question 5.

“I think that the whole A31 is problematic especially westbound, the evening queues can stretch along portions of the whole route from the end of the M27 and especially the section at Cadnam, with the bunnyhop hills and sharp right turn at the summit, is dreadful.”

- Respondent Reference A31R073

Many respondents also made reference to the fact that the main issue is traffic having to cross, merge or change lanes in a short space. Respondents stated that the A31 layout as it stands confuses drivers and slows down traffic.

“As a daily user of the road, to me there are clear issues not just with the Ringwood/Verwood turn offs, but all off and on slips through Ringwood on the A31 in both directions. They were designed for a smaller volume of traffic but are too short and end too quickly to the extent that it is impossible to accelerate to the speed of traffic on the carriageway when traffic is free flowing. It is this that causes congestion and is a significant safety issue.”

- Respondent Reference A31R167

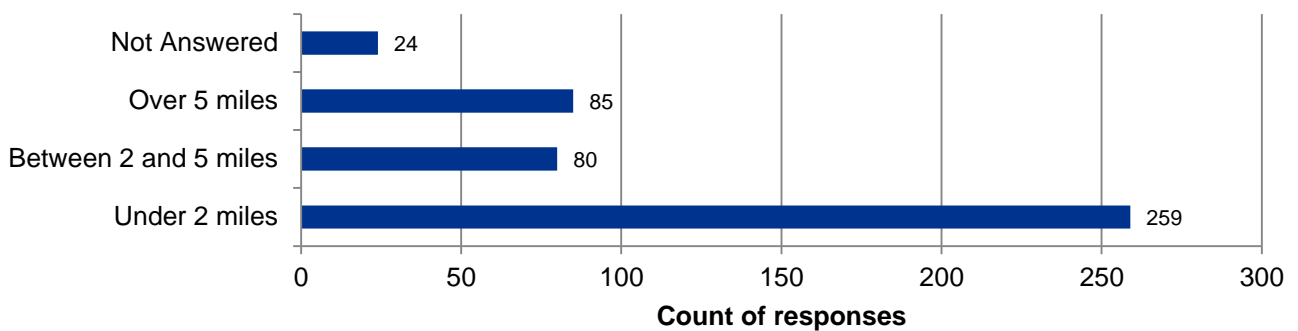
Some respondents also noted that traffic problems at the A31 Ringwood junction are not significant, and that traffic levels are not at a problematic level.

“Whilst I agree that there is congestion at peak times, I do not feel it is at a level which constitutes a big problem, nor do I feel the delays are particularly long.”

- Respondent Reference A31R187

Q6. How close do you live to the proposed A31 Ringwood improvement?

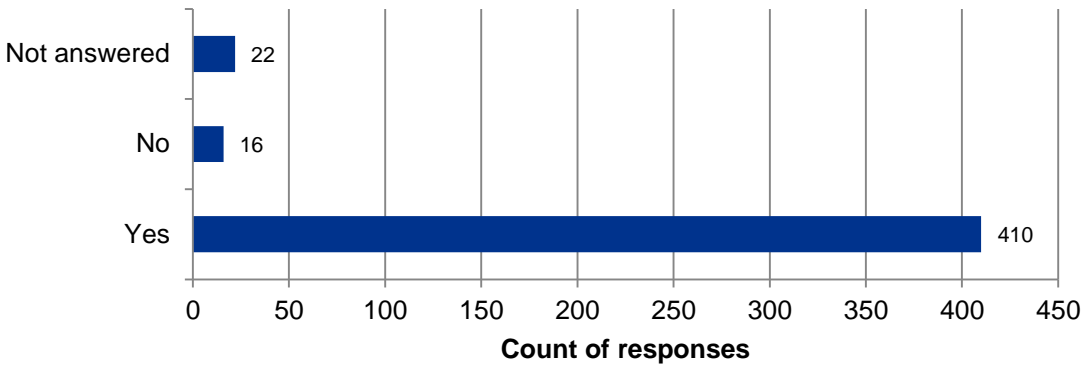
Respondents were asked to provide some information on how close they lived to the proposed scheme. Only one option could be selected out of the three provided. This question helped us to understand those who may be impacted by short or long haul travel plans.



424 respondents answered this question, with the majority (259), saying that they lived less than two miles from the proposed scheme. 85 people said they lived over 5 miles and 80 said they lived between two and five miles.

Q7. Do you think there is a need to improve the A31 at Ringwood?

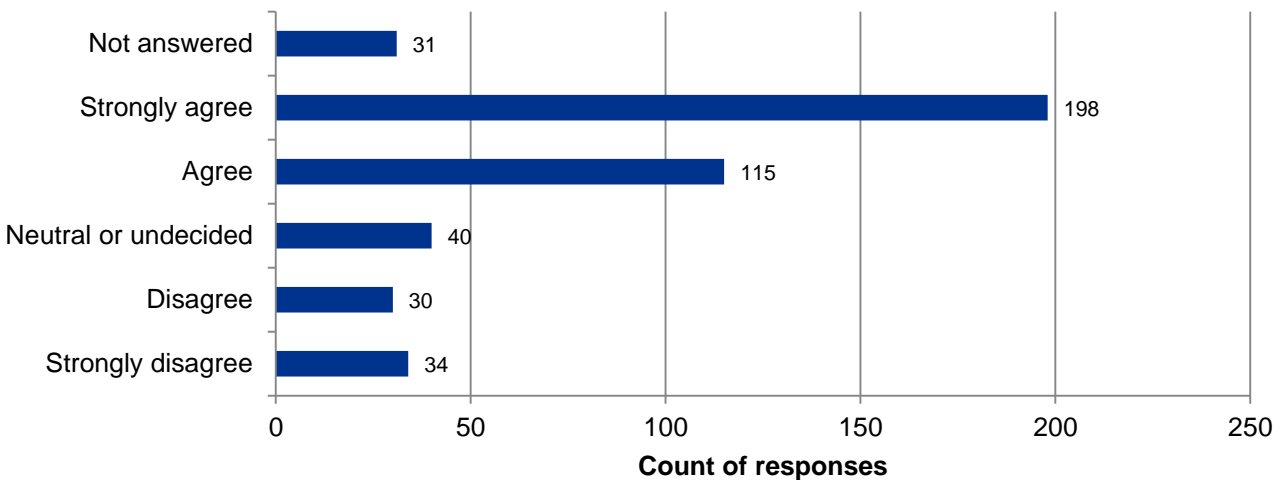
Respondents were asked whether they thought there was a need to improve the A31. They could choose one of the two options, yes or no.



Out of the 426 respondents to Question 7, a vast majority (410) have stated that there is a need for improvements on the A31 Ringwood section. A small number of respondents (16) felt that there was no need for improvements.

Q8. Overall, to what extent do you agree with the proposed Option?

Question 8 asked respondents to comment how much they agreed with the proposed scheme. Respondents were asked to respond on a scale of “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree”. Respondents could only provide one response.

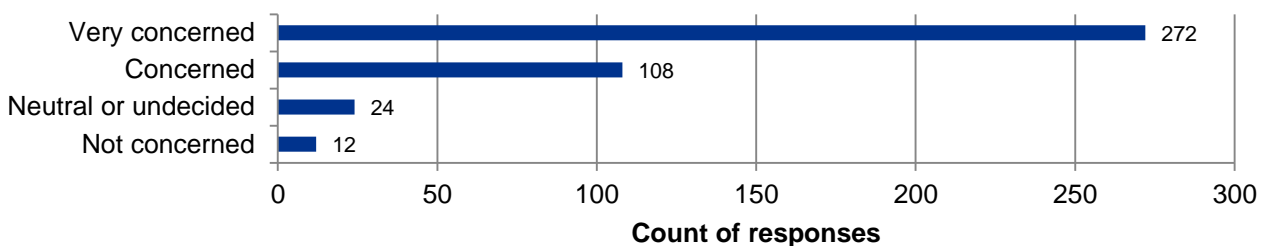


A total of 417 responded to Question 8. A majority (198) strongly agreed with the proposed option with several respondents (115) agreeing with it. 34 respondents strongly disagreed and 30 disagreed with the proposed option.

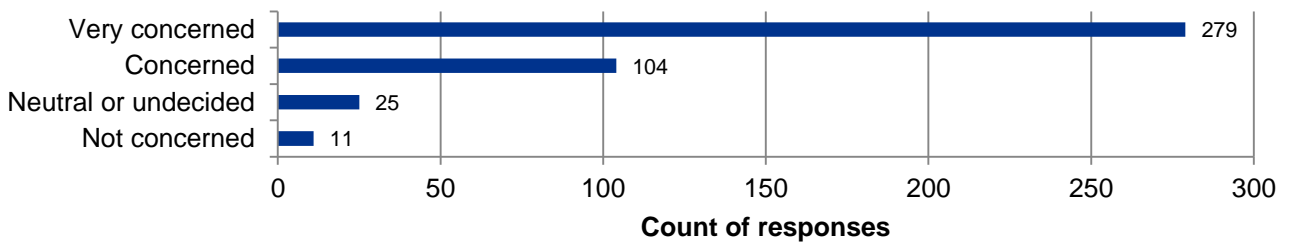
Q9. Which issues around the A31 Ringwood Improvement are you most concerned about?

Respondents were asked to comment on how concerned they were on the following areas regarding the A31: Safety on the A31, congestion on the A31 between Ringwood to Verwood junction, reliability of journey times on the A31 and environmental impact. Respondents were asked to choose one option ranging from “very concerned” to “not concerned” in order to capture a variety of opinions that may arise from each topic. By carrying out this exercise this allowed us to understand the concerns respondents had in regards to the current situation on the A31 and what the main issues were.

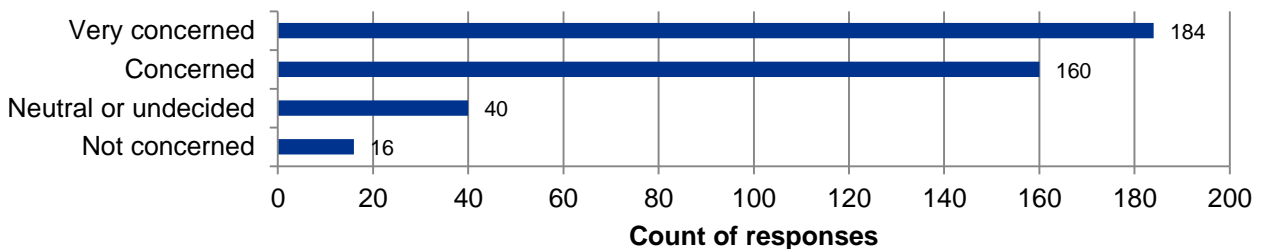
Safety on the A31



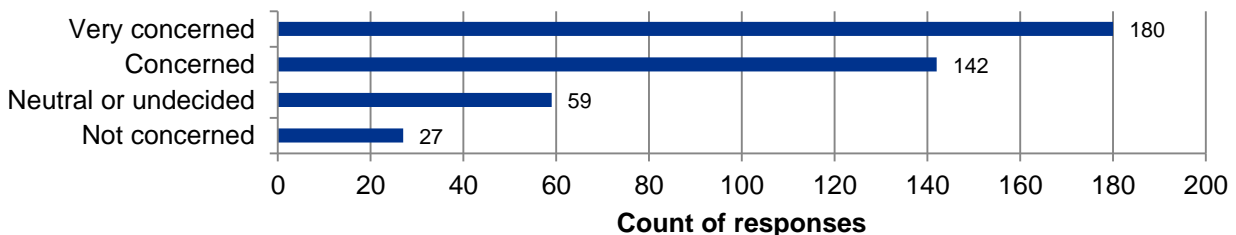
Congestion on the A31 between Ringwood and Verwood junction



Reliability of journey times on the A31



Environmental impact of congestion on the A31

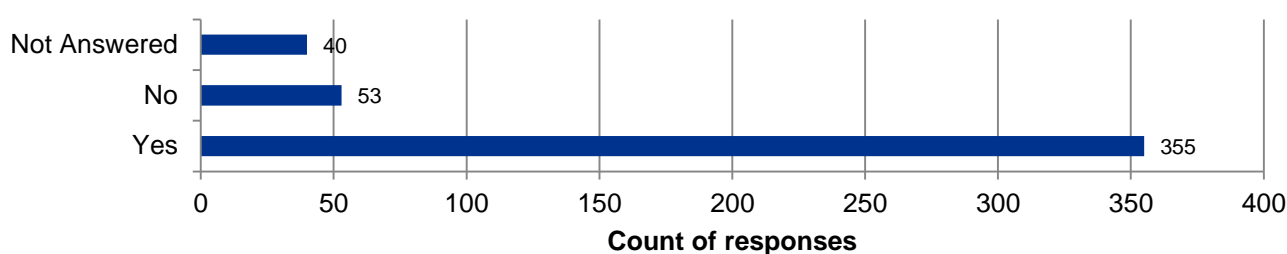


Responses to Question 9 highlight various levels of concern around safety, congestion, journey time reliability and environmental impacts on the A31. A majority of respondents noted concern over safety and congestion. Respondents not concerned tend to be higher in relation to environmental impact and journey time reliability.

4.3 Options justification

Part of the consultation brochure gave an explanation to the options considered which led to the proposed scheme. This section addresses the responses to Question 13 which asked respondents whether they were clear on the justification for rejecting the other options identified.

Q13. Do you understand the justification for Options 2 and 3 being rejected?



408 respondents answer this question. A large majority of those respondents noted that they did understand the reasons for rejecting Options 2 and 3. Of those that noted they did not understand the justification for rejecting the other options, several respondents provided comments to raise concerns regarding the proposal being taken forward.

The comments raised are reflected in more detail in the following sections of this report. The key issues raised include:

- Several comments related to concerns with the closure of the West Street access to the A31 (see Section 4.5 for further details);
- Concerns that the scheme does not address what is perceived as the “real problem”, and in particular there is a sense that the problem to address is at the petrol station (see Section 4.8 for further details);
- Some respondents noted that the proposed option would increase congestion within Ringwood town centre (see Section 4.7 for further details); and
- Other respondents noted the need for a reduction in speed limit as a means to improving the road network (see Section 4.7 for further details).

Some of the other comments raised in Question 13 included a concern that not enough information was provided regarding the rejected Options 2 and 3, and various alternative options were suggested for consideration such as:

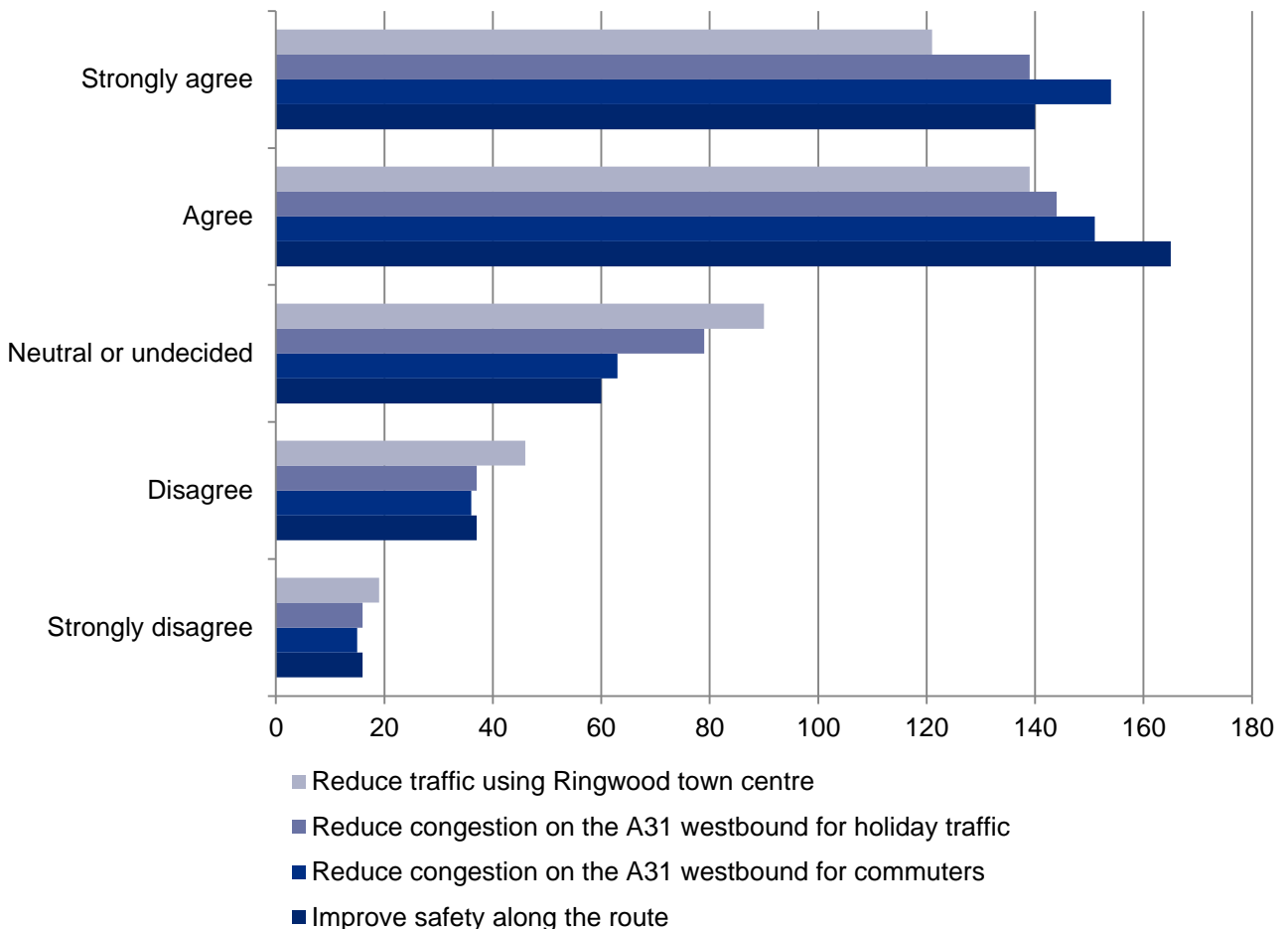
- Improving the access from West Street to the A31 rather than closing it;
- Creating a new lane to provide access to and from the A31, Fish Inn and petrol station, or generally widening the A31.

These alternatives and others noted in questions other than Question 13 are covered in more detail within Section 4.8.

4.4 Scheme objectives

The consultation questionnaire included a series of questions to help us determine whether respondents felt the proposed scheme would meet Highways England’s key objectives: improved safety, reduced congestion for commuters, reduced congestion for holiday traffic and reduced traffic in Ringwood town centre. This section addresses responses to Question 10, in which respondents were asked to select an option on a scale between strong disagreement and strong agreement.

Q10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the A31 Ringwood improvement scheme will achieve the scheme objectives?



Overall, responses from Question 10 show a general agreement with the scheme being able to achieve its objectives, in particular with regards to improving safety and reducing congestion on the A31 westbound for commuters and holiday traffic. Objectives where respondents tended to show a higher level of disagreement were in relation to reducing traffic using Ringwood town centre, however there remains an overall agreement with the scheme’s ability to meet objectives.

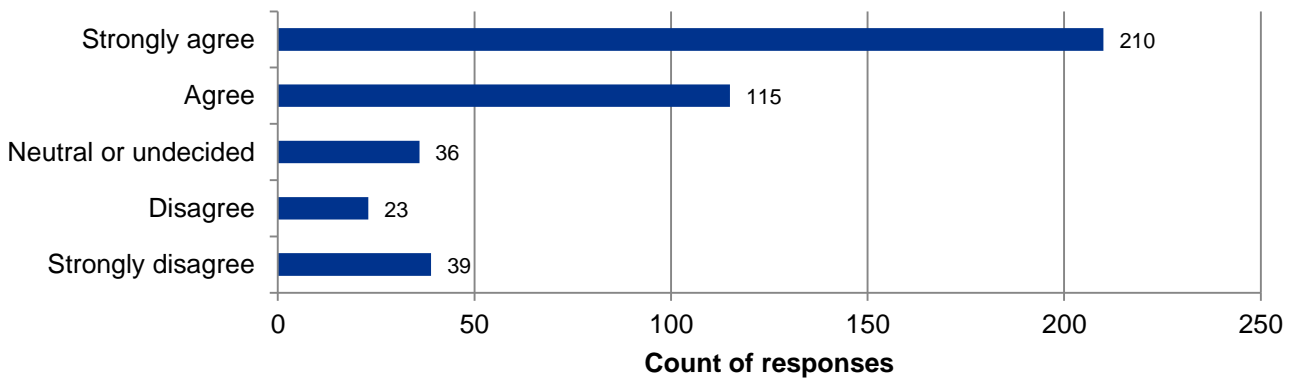
4.5 Closure of West Street to the A31

This section will cover the matter of the closure of West Street to the A31. Respondents were asked to answer two closed questions, Questions 11 and 12. Respondents also covered this topic in Question 14.

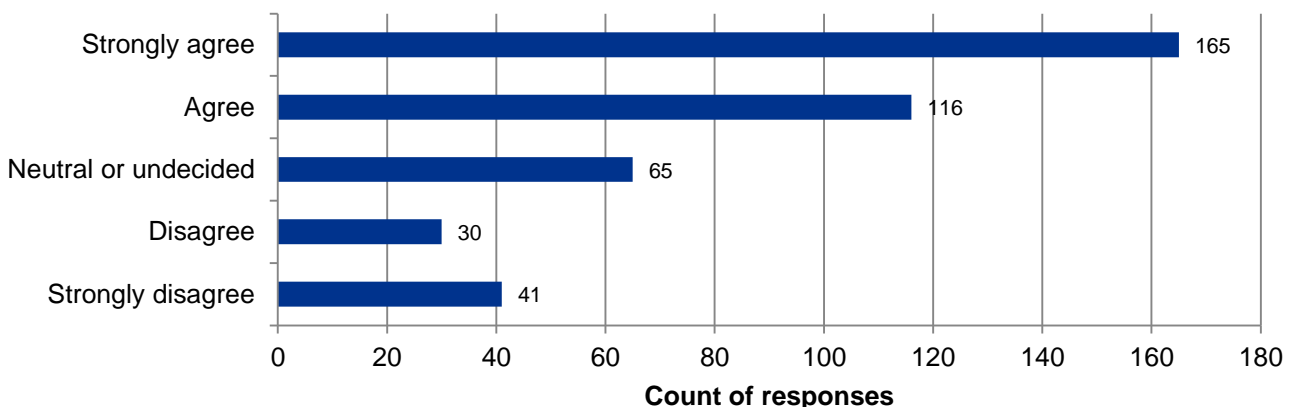
Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the closure of access from West Street to the A31 will achieve the scheme objectives?

Question 11 asked respondents to say to what degree they felt the closure of West Street would achieve the scheme objectives. This question was split into two parts, one asking whether they thought the scheme would “improve safety along the route” and the second whether it would “reduce congestion and improve journey times on the A31 westbound”. Respondents had to choose one option ranging from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree”.

Improve safety along the route



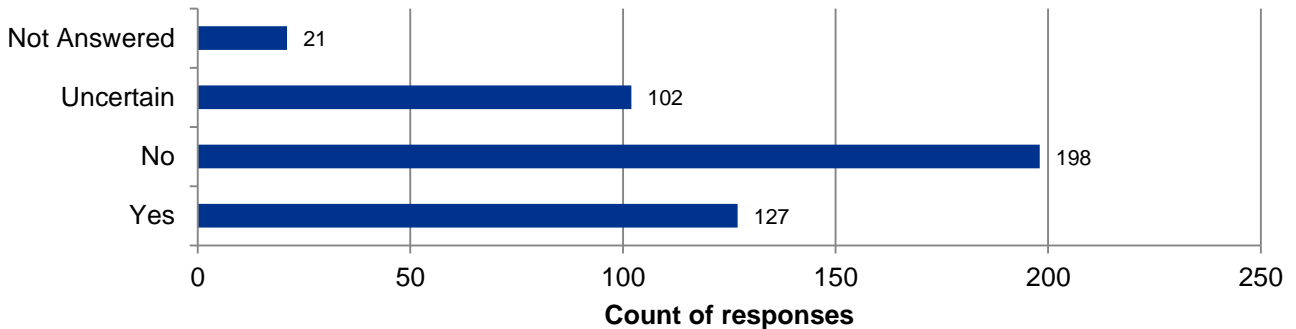
Reduce congestion and improve journey times on the A31 westbound



In response to Question 11, a majority of respondents tend to agree or strongly agree that the closure of the West Street access to the A31 will achieve the scheme objectives; this is particularly the case with regarding to improving safety along the route where 210 respondents strongly agree. Fewer respondents agree that the closure of West Street would reduce congestion or improve journey times; this is line with some of the comments received regarding the closure of West Street access, see below for further details.

Q12 - Do you believe that the closure of the access to the A31 from West Street will have an impact on local businesses, on both West Street and Ringwood in general?

Respondents were asked to comment on whether they believed the closure of West Street would have an impact on local businesses on West Street and in Ringwood.



427 respondents answered this question with most (198) saying that they did not think the closure of West Street will have an impact on local business on West Street and Ringwood. 127 respondents did believe that the closure would have an impact on businesses while 102 were not certain.

Closure of West Street comments

This next section outlines some of the key responses received within Question 14 regarding the closure of West Street to the A31.

4.5.1.A Concern with closure of West Street access to the A31

Of those respondents who commented on the closure of West Street, the main issue that was raised was concern with closing West Street. There were a variety of reasons for why respondents raised their concerns about the closure of West Street. One of the key reasons was the concern that congestion would be worse if there was an accident on the A31 because there would be no other routes for traffic to avoid the incident.

“I have a concern that the total closure of West Street access to A31 will have unintended consequences. For example, an accident on the slipway joining the A31 out of Ringwood may result in the road / slipway being closed. [...] Having access to join the A31 via West Street in “emergency” situations will help overcome the gridlock and should be considered.”

– Respondent Reference A31R145

Highways England response: The main reason for closing West Street is to improve safety on the A31. If West Street was kept open our analysis has shown that the number of Killed and Seriously Injured on the A31 would increase. We have also carried out detailed traffic modelling to understand the impact of traffic rerouting as a result of the closure of West Street. The traffic modelling has indicated that there is no significant impact on traffic in Ringwood Town Centre as a result of closing West Street. Further consideration regarding the method of closure of West Street will be investigated within the forthcoming Development stage.

4.5.1.B West Street access should be available for emergency situations

Suggestions were also made that West Street exit should be usable in emergencies. Some respondents who were concerned with the closure of West Street suggested that it should be used by emergency services so that they could access the incident.

“Please make the West Street closure from a removable barrier for use in emergencies.”

Respondent Reference A31R083

Highways England response: We will discuss the closure of West Street with the emergency services to ensure they can continue to carry out their duties effectively and we will work with them to ensure we mitigate any concerns they may have.

4.5.1.C Support for the closure of West Street access

Whilst many respondents were concerned about the closure of West Street and its consequences, others showed their support for closure of West Street. Some respondents noted that it would improve safety along the A31.

4.5.1.D Closure of West Street will not improve congestion

However some respondents noted that the closure of West Street will have little effect on congestion. Some respondents noted that this is due to the fact that other immediate areas within the scheme boundaries are the main causes for congestion, such as the entrance/exit of the petrol station. The reliability of journey times and concern with congestion on the A31 was an issue that was of high concern and importance to respondents as shown in Section 4.2.

“Closing West Street alone will only have a marginal impact on reducing the congestion on the A31 westbound. Traffic slowing down to enter or let traffic joining from the petrol station adjacent to the Fish Inn is the biggest cause of congestion.”

- Respondent Reference A31R117

Highways England response: The main reason we have proposed to close West Street is to improve safety on the A31, rather than reduce congestion. We have identified that safety issues on West Street could worsen in the future without improvements. Improvements in congestion on the A31 would be enabled by the proposed additional lane between Ringwood and Verwood junction.

4.5.1.E Closure of West Street access will worsen congestion

Another issue that was raised was concern about cars driving down West Street, with particular concern around safety. This is due to the fact that cars would have to come back through town instead of filtering out onto the A31. Others commented that cars drive very quickly down the road, raising safety concerns for pedestrians and other non-motorised users. However, the most common concern was that there would be confusion amongst drivers who did not know that West Street was closed.

“The closure on the onslip would improve safety but I think it would have little effect on congestion and for a while would probably cause more congestion due to confused/rerouted motorists in Ringwood town centre etc and possibly effect the business of journey times are extended by diversions.”

- Respondent Reference A31R011

Highways England response: As part of our proposals, signage in the town centre will be amended to ensure drivers are warned of the closure and directing them to an alternative route to the A31. A turning space will be also provided at the end of West Street to allow vehicles to turn around and travel back through West Street. It is common that there will be a period when drivers will need to become accustomed to the new configuration, however this will become normal for all drivers once gaining experience of the new street layout.

4.6 Open comments

Question 14 asked respondents if they had any further comments or observations regarding the A31 improvement scheme. These open comments were reviewed and analysed to understand the key themes and issues arising from the consultation (see Section 3 of this report for further details on how responses were analysed). The following sections outline some of the key topics and issues that have arisen from responses to Question 14.

4.6.1 Environmental comments

Several respondents made comments regarding environmental concerns in relation to the scheme as well as suggestions for particular mitigation measures to be considered.

4.6.1.A Noise concerns

Noise impacts were a common concern raised. Concerns were raised regarding excessive or increased noise pollution during construction and / or operation of the scheme. The importance of noise mitigation measures were also raised by several respondents, and the need to consider these as a core component of the scheme. Requests were made for noise barriers and noise reducing road surface.

“Whilst it is noted as a consideration, along with other environmental matters, it appears that you may carry out the highway changes but, as in the past, not actually incorporate the noise attenuation measures that should be central to the scheme.”

- Respondent Reference A31R151

Highways England response: We have identified that small increases in noise levels are predicted in some areas due to the proposed scheme. However, some areas will experience a reduction in noise levels. Quantitative noise modelling will be completed in the next stage of the project. Where there is an increase in noise levels, mitigation measures will be considered as appropriate such as low noise road surface, the erection of noise barriers and/or incorporation of earth bunds for screening.

4.6.1.B Air quality concerns

Comments were also made regarding air quality concerns associated with slow-moving traffic, concerns for air pollution impacts on pedestrians and more generally within Ringwood.

Highways England response: We remain committed to reducing air quality impacts wherever possible. At this stage, we do not expect any significant negative change, but this will be confirmed through detailed assessments to be undertaken in the next stage.

4.6.2 Traffic and transport comments

This section outlines some of the key responses received within Question 14 regarding traffic and transport matters. A number of respondents made comments regarding traffic and transport concerns in relation to the A31 as well as scheme suggestions to improve congestion issues.

4.6.2.A Speed limit on the A31

The speed limit on the A31 was an issue raised by many respondents in terms of traffic implication and safety concerns, with several respondents stating that the speed limit should be reduced. One of the main reasons why respondents made this comment was the suggestion that it will improve traffic flow. It was also suggested that a variable speed limit should be implemented between various points on the A31 between Picket Post and St Leonards.

“The speed limit should be reduced along the whole road. If vehicles coming over the bridge did not travel so fast it would be easier for other vehicles to join from the slip road.”

- Respondent Reference A31R412

Whilst the majority of respondents commented that the speed limit should be reduced, some respondents noted that the speed limit should remain the same as it would cause more congestion if the speed limit was reduced.

“As for reducing the speed limit, that is never the answer as it causes people to slam on breaks causing significant traffic build up.”

- Respondent Reference A31R100

Highways England response: we are aware of some concerns locally about the current speed limit on the A31. The reduction of the current 70mph limit is not within the scope of this project as it would form part of the wider A31 route strategy if considered by Highways England.

4.6.2.B Impact of the scheme on other local roads

Another issue that was raised was the concern of current traffic flows on other local roads within Ringwood and on the nearby road network. There is a concern that there is existing congestion, particularly on the approach to Ringwood junction, and that the scheme would worsen this. Respondents noted the following various streets within Ringwood, including Christchurch road, West Street, High Street, and Market Street would be affected.

“There will be extra traffic through the town via Christchurch road which already gets congested with commuter traffic getting stuck on the Ringwood Junction roundabout. Closing West Street will only amplify this traffic.”

- Respondent Reference A31R384

Respondents were also concerned about how the A31 traffic flows were affecting other local roads causing rat running, with some respondents noting that the proposed scheme would not resolve the issue. Hightown Hill in Poulner was one particular location that was mentioned as an area suffering from rat running. Issues that were raised in conjunction with this were safety concerns and unsuitability of the roads for the volume of traffic that uses them. Some respondents made suggestions that this area should be considered as part of the scheme and also provided ideas as to how to improve the issue.

“Consideration needs to be given to the use of Hightown Hill and Eastfield Lane as a short cut both whilst the works are taking place and afterwards - whilst the closure of West Street will lower traffic volumes in Ringwood Town Centre, there is a likelihood that the problem will move elsewhere. The junction of the A31 and Hightown Hill is not suitable for current traffic volumes, let alone any increase.”

- Respondent Reference A31R091

The effect of the scheme on Poulner Hill was another issue that was raised. With the queuing on the A31, the result is that vehicles try to avoid it by going through Poulner Hill and joining at the West Street junction.

Highways England response: We have carried out detailed traffic analysis and identified that 86% of the traffic using the West Street junction is through-traffic rather than traffic stopping in the town. This traffic will be able to use the improved Ringwood on-slip to continue their journey, which will provide a safer and more reliable journey. We have also carried out traffic modelling within Ringwood to assess the impact of traffic rerouting as a result of the West Street closure. The modelling has shown no significant impact on traffic within Ringwood as a result of closing West Street.

We are aware that traffic is currently leaving the A31 and travelling through Ringwood to avoid the congestion on the A31 and re-joining the A31 at West Street. By improving the A31, traffic will no longer leave the A31 and travel through Ringwood as the A31 will be a quicker route. In 2020 the journey time between Poulner Hill and the Verwood junction (1.7 miles) without the scheme will take 8 minutes. With the scheme implemented, journey time will reduce to 2 minutes.

4.6.2.C The scheme will reduce congestion

In support of the proposed option, respondents commented that the additional lane on the A31 would alleviate congestion and improve traffic flows.

“The 3rd lane option is the best option, there certainly looks like there is room. The biggest problem is traffic merging onto the A31 westbound from the A338 Salisbury direction and Ringwood town centre. A 3rd lane would allow traffic from there to flow straight onto the A31 without having to merge.”

- Respondent Reference A31R033

4.6.2.D Taking account of future traffic increases

The need to take future traffic forecasts into account is another concern that was raised by respondents in regards the proposed scheme. Some concerns were noted that the additional lane on the A31 will not be enough to withstand the growth in the areas surrounding Ringwood.

“I welcome the proposals. This widening should have happened when the work on the grade separated junction took place. My concern is that one extra lane may not be sufficient for the volume of traffic today and in the future.”

- Respondent Reference A31R133

Highways England response: We are aware that the Bournemouth / Poole / Christchurch area is the fastest-growing on the south coast. As such, a safe and operational road will be required to meet the increasing demands of current and future traffic growth. Our traffic modelling has accounted for the approved local plans and we are also working closely with New Forest District Council to understand their emerging local plans to ensure the additional traffic from those developments are accounted for.

4.6.2.E Impact on West Street

As noted above, concern with traffic going back through Ringwood from West Street was a significant concern raised. The main concern is due to the closure of West Street and the potential that cars make the mistake of going down West Street will have to turn around. However, the more significant issue which was mentioned was that buses from the bus depot would have to come back through Ringwood and through the market place, causing more congestion in the town itself.

“Closing West Street will mean that all buses from the depot will have to use the highstreet. On market day the highstreet is closed to traffic meaning that the buses would not be able to exit the depot.”

- Respondent Reference A31R246

Highways England response: Signage in the town centre will be amended to ensure drivers are warned of the closure and directing them to an alternative route to the A31. A turning space will be also provided at the end of West Street to allow vehicles to turn around and travel back through West Street. We are also currently in discussion with the bus company to identify how we can mitigate any issues the closure of West Street would have on their operations. On a typical day, 12 buses use the West Street junction. These buses could reroute through Ringwood and use the Ringwood on slip without a significant impact on their route and on traffic in Ringwood Town Centre.

4.6.3 Highways design and suggestion comments

This section outlines comments made within Question 14 regarding the design of the scheme and highways considerations. Please note that all comments in relation to the closure of West Street access to the A31 are covered in Section 4.5 of this report.

4.6.3.A Suggestions for alternatives

Many respondents provided various suggestions for alternatives to the scheme; including:

- Changing or lengthening of the West Street exit on the A31, including extending it to act as a link road between West Street and Verwood junction;
- Use of various traffic management measures instead of constructing new infrastructure such as managing vehicle speeds;
- Dedicated and designated left-turns off the A31;
- Widening the A31, for example to four lanes or to include a hard shoulder;
- Closure or changes to access at the Verwood exit; and
- Removing access to the A31 at Ringwood altogether.

Highways England response: As part of the work undertaken to date on the scheme, we have considered a range of options, including those identified within the consultation documents. The option put forward as part of this consultation has been selected on the basis that it best meets the objectives of the scheme of improving safety and reducing congestion on the A31. We will consider the elements of the alternatives put forward by respondents to understand if these are viable or whether they can be addressed as part of this scheme.

4.6.3.B Need for clear road markings and signage

Another suggestion which is noted by many respondents is the need for clear road markings and signage as part of the scheme in order to effectively direct traffic. This is highlighted as important to be able to advise and guide drivers on appropriate lanes as early as possible (such as at Poulner Hill and the petrol station). Mention is also made of improved signage for pedestrians and cyclists.

“Signage and road markings will be just as important as the physical changes to the road.”

- Respondent Reference A31R035

Highways England responses: We will be developing a full signage strategy in the next stage, which will review the existing signage on the A31 and within Ringwood town centre. This will also identify what changes are required to improve the signage in the area.

4.6.3.C Concerns with the petrol station entrance and exit

Another issue raised is a concern regarding the petrol station, and in particular requests to move or close this facility. This area is noted by respondents as a risk area for collisions due to the short slip road onto/off the A31, with vehicles on the A31 slowing down to enter the petrol station, and vehicles pulling out onto the fast-moving A31 from the petrol station.

“The scheme should have included the removal of the petrol garage as one of the major problems is vehicles exiting the garage at slow speed on to the fast carriageway whilst vehicles undertake lane changes.”

- Respondent Reference A31R435

There is uncertainty from some respondents as to why the petrol station has not been considered as part of the scheme. It is often referred to as equally or more problematic as the access to / from West Street. There are associated suggestions on the need to lengthen the exit from the petrol station.

Highways England response: We have reviewed the existing petrol station to understand how the access and exit will operate once the proposed scheme is implemented. Our proposal includes the closure of the West Street access to the A31 and an improved access / exit to the petrol filling station, which should reduce the likelihood of conflicts, which cause accidents occurring. Additionally, improved advance traffic signs and road markings will be considered as part of the signing strategy which will be developed in the next stage to ensure drivers have the sufficient information regarding the correct lane to be in depending on their destination. In the peak evening period, 912 vehicles use the West Street junction to access the A31. This compares to 79 vehicles that enter the petrol station in the same period. By closing the West Street junction, the number of conflicting manoeuvres will be significantly reduced.

4.6.3.D Concern with lane swaps and merges

Other comments raised in relation to highways and the scheme design include a concern that the scheme does not address the need to change or swap lanes, which is considered to be one of the main risks on the A31.

Highways England response: As noted above, we will develop a full signage strategy will in the next stage of the scheme which will review the signage on the A31 and within Ringwood town centre to determine what changes are required to improve the signage in the area. Part of that review will be to look at providing signage to better inform drivers about which lanes they should be in depending on their destination to avoid late lane change manoeuvres.

4.6.3.E A338 traffic

Comments were also raised regarding the **need to consider traffic on the A338 from Salisbury** coming onto the A31 Ringwood junction, noted as an area of particular congestion. There are concerns that this scheme does not address this issue.

“The fundamental problem of a busy north/south flow (A338) meeting a very busy east/west flow (A31) will remain.”

- Respondent Reference A31R243

Highways England response: The A338 forms part of our scheme traffic model. Through our traffic modelling we have identified that there is no significant issue with traffic coming from the A338 joining the A31 once the proposed scheme is implemented.

4.6.4 Growth and development

This section outlines some of the key responses received within Question 14 regarding comments made about local and regional growth and developments. A number of concerns were made regarding this topic, many in relation to the scheme’s impact on local businesses.

4.6.4.A Scheme impact on businesses

There was concern about negative impact on local businesses, and that the closure of West Street would be to the detriment of the success of local businesses.

“Closing West Street will be a disaster for Ringwood as far as I am concerned. The businesses in West Street will undoubtedly suffer from the loss of passing trade. They are very much against West [Street] closure. Ringwood is already turning into a town of coffee shops with other trades struggling already.”

- Respondent Reference A31R122

While respondents made comments about businesses on West Street in general, some made specific comments about the negative impact on the Fish Inn. This is due to the proposal of the closure of West Street and the entrance / exit onto the A31. Concerns were also raised around the impact on the bus depot. Similar to the Fish Inn, the main reason for this issue being raised is due to the proposal to close West Street. Some respondents commented that it will result in jobs being lost and causing safety issues within Ringwood itself.

“The Bus station will be badly affected- possibly have to close causing massive job loss. Or cause gridlock, accidents as buses will be frequently up and down High Street instead of exiting by Fish, along with all the delivery lorries.”

- Respondent Reference A31R217

Highways England response: we are currently in discussions with the Fish Inn to determine the potential impact the scheme will have on their business. We are also currently in discussion with the bus company to determine the potential impact the proposed scheme will have on their operations. We will work closely with all local business to ensure mitigation such as signage is considered to minimise any potential impact on local businesses.

4.6.4.B Local developments

Proposed local developments in the area surrounding Ringwood was also raised as a potential issue. Respondents raised the issue to consider local housing developments and how these will lead to increased congestion.

“Surely town planning also needs to go hand in hand with improvement plans? More and more industrial units and housing estates are introduced to the area, greatly increasing the flow of traffic in and out of Ringwood – with that in mind, reducing the exit options out of the town, seems a very back idea indeed!”

- Respondent Reference A31R273

Highways England response: we are aware that this is a fast-growing on the south coast with various plans for growth and development. As such, a safe and operational road will be required to meet the increasing demands of current and future traffic growth. We have included the approved local planned growth in our traffic model and we have had discussions with New Forest District Council to understand their future development plans and to assess the impact on the A31 as a result of the increase in traffic from those planned developments.

4.6.4.C Ringwood will benefit from the scheme

Respondents also mentioned how Ringwood will benefit from the scheme. This was namely due to the fact that the scheme would address the issue of the rat run onto the A31 via West Street. Other respondents also highlighted that the scheme would benefit local businesses as well as the town itself.

“I think that the closure of the West Street access to the A31 will improve the overall town centre environment and will thus benefit businesses in West Street and also Ringwood in general.”

- Respondent Reference A31R054

4.6.5 Construction

This section outlines comments made within Question 14 regarding the construction of the scheme.

4.6.5.A Concern about roadworks

Most comments on construction related to general concerns or queries around roadworks. There is a concern that the impacts of construction outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

“The impact that these improvements are going to have on journey times over 18 months whilst the improvement takes place these outweigh the benefit of saving four minutes on a journey between Verwood and Ringwood.”

- Respondent Reference A31R082

Other respondents note that construction should be effectively planned to limit impact during holidays and busy periods, or reduce the length of the construction period as much as possible. Some respondents also raised concerned with specific impacts of construction such as potential rat runs or impacts on pedestrian routes.

Highways England Response: We appreciate that, during construction, journey times will increase due to additional congestion or diversions which will be in place. We will be producing a robust construction plan, which will be developed to minimise the congestion during the works. This will

include a detailed traffic management plan, which will consider the use of temporary signage during construction to ensure drivers are aware of the works, and will look to address local concerns in relation to the construction.

4.6.6 Safety

As a key objective of the scheme, various comments were raised as part of Question 14 in relation to safety considerations and concerns.

4.6.6.A Safety concerns for cyclist and pedestrians

Many respondents noted the importance of improving safety on the A31 Ringwood junction. A particular area of concern is the danger to cyclists and pedestrians on the road network, with respondents highlighting specific risk areas such as:

- The foot/cycle path running across the petrol station;
- The south side of the A31;
- The pedestrian/cycle path sited between the Fish Inn & B3081

“My concerns are over safety for pedestrian, cyclists and people using mobility scooters/wheelchairs on the pavement to the south of this part of the A31. The path should be widened and some form of protection provided where the path is adjacent to the road, especially at the Verwood turn off. Current markings on the path encourage cyclists and others to use the path to go into Ringwood. Perhaps better provision could be made for cyclists and others to use West Street more safely as it will presumably be a much quieter road if it is no longer a rat run.”

- Respondent Reference A31R116

Highways England response: We have included improvements for pedestrians and cyclists as part of the proposals. The footpath between West Street and the Verwood junction would be improved as part of the scheme. We are also in discussions with Ringwood Town Council, New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council to identify potential improvements for pedestrians and cyclists within Ringwood Town Centre.

4.6.6.B Impact of the scheme on safety

Regarding the impact of the scheme on safety, some respondents state the closure of West Street access onto the A31 will improve safety, highlighting it as a dangerous and hazardous junction.

“Safety is paramount as it is very dangerous joining the A31 from West Street when the traffic is fast moving on A31 [and] slows down traffic on A31 at busy times.”

- Respondent Reference A31R199

Other respondents feel that West Street access is safe as it currently stands. Reference is made to the give-way lines which have been added recently, noting these as having improved safety.

“There is no need to close West Street now that the give way lines are there. This has much improved the situation.”

- Respondent Reference A31R122

Highways England response: The West Street junction is currently a sub-standard layout, which has significant safety issues. Our analysis has shown that the number of Killed and Seriously Injured would increase if the West Street junction was kept open. Currently 86% of the traffic using the West Street junction is through-traffic rather than traffic stopping in the town. This traffic will be able to use the improved Ringwood on-slip to continue their journey, which will provide a safer and more reliable journey.

4.6.6.C Petrol station access is unsafe

Several respondents also noted safety concerns in relation to the petrol station entry onto/off the A31. Access to and from the petrol station is noted as a significant risk area to be addressed, with suggestions made to lengthen the entrance and exit lanes.

“The petrol station forecourt is currently unprotected; with increased speeds through the section there is a risk that a collision could result in the vehicles entering the forecourt.”

- Respondent Reference A31R036

Highways England response: As noted in Section 4.8, we have reviewed the existing petrol station to understand how the access and exit will operate once the proposed scheme is implemented. Our proposal includes the closure of the West Street access to the A31 and an improved access / exit to the petrol filling station, which aims to reduce the likelihood of conflicts, causing accidents occurring. Additionally, improved advance traffic signs and road markings will be considered as part of the signage strategy which will be developed in the next stage to ensure drivers have the sufficient information regarding the correct lane to be in depending on their destination.

4.6.7 Other comments

A range of other comments were raised as part of Question 14 covering various topics.

4.6.7.A Cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure

Several respondents made comments regarding pedestrian and cycle facilities, stating that the current facilities need to be considered and improved.

“As a keen and regular cyclist I do hope that proper cycle lane facilities are given due consideration during this process, as incremental use of cycles can only help improve many of the ‘green’ issues including congestion reduction.”

- Respondent Reference A31R084

Several respondents request better signage for cyclists and pedestrians, as well as improved links.

Highways England response: As part of the scheme the footway and cycleway adjacent to the scheme between West Street and Verwood junction will be improved. We are also working closely with Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council and Ringwood Town Council to identify potential improvements facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians within Ringwood town centre.

4.6.7.B Cost and value for money

Cost of the scheme was also noted on several occasions by respondents. There are concerns that the scheme does not provide value for money or that the money spent would not significantly improve the situation. Other respondents note the need for cheaper solutions.

Highways England response: Value for money is an important consideration which Highways England considers in the development of its scheme and is assessed in each stage of a project. Our economic assessment has indicated the proposed option provides value for money.

4.6.7.C Consideration of other parts of the road network

Several respondents also noted that the scheme is overdue or that it is needed soon. Respondents note the need for consideration of other nearby parts of the road network, in particular at the Verwood junction as well as the link with A338.

Highways England response: The Verwood junction and the A338 is currently outside the scope of this scheme. Highways England is currently carrying out a review of the entire A31 as part of their wider route strategy. We have carried out traffic modelling within Ringwood to assess the impact of traffic re-routing as a result of the West Street closure. Our modelling has shown no significant impact on traffic within Ringwood as a result of closing West Street and implementing the scheme. There is no significant issue with traffic coming from the A338 joining the A31 once the proposed scheme is implemented.

5 Summary and conclusions

With over 400 responses to the consultation, we have received many comments, feedback and views, which will be fed into the next stages of the scheme, and which has enabled us to reflect on the consultation and on the progressing design. The results of the questionnaire revealed several concerns, interest and viewpoints on the proposed scheme as well as the current situation at the A31 Ringwood junction.

One of the key results ascertained was a widespread sentiment that there is a need for improvement along the A31 at Ringwood, particularly with regards to congestion issues. Respondents highlighted notable congestion issues on the A31 and various concerns for the safety of all users of the A31, including the need to upgrade cycling and pedestrian facilities.

The closure of West Street was a topic that was frequently raised, with respondents expressing a variety of different opinions ranging between support and disapproval of removing access to the A31 from West Street. Overall, responses would suggest that there is overall agreement with the need to close this junction with the A31. The main issues respondents had with the closure of West Street related to impact on local businesses (in particular, the Fish Inn) and a perception that this would not improve congestion issues.

Another issue raised was the concern that the scheme would not address other known areas of congestion. In particular, the entrance and exit of the nearby petrol station onto the A31 was raised by many respondents as a significant safety and congestion problem. Several respondents requested that the petrol station be closed or relocated. Respondents also drew attention to the congestion at Hightown Hill and Poulner Hill due to the worsening traffic flows on the A31.

A notable concern was in relation to the speed limit on this section of the A31. Many respondents stated that the speed limit should be reduced in order to improve traffic flow. Similarly, the importance of clear signage and road markings as part of the proposed improvements was raised by several respondents to enable the flow of traffic.

There are some concerns over the impact of the scheme on local roads within Ringwood and in the neighbouring area. For example, a concern was raised that more traffic would have to revert through Ringwood rather than exit at West Street onto the A31. Other comments related to potential environmental impacts of the scheme, with particular reference to noise and air quality impacts. Suggestions were made for appropriate mitigation of all impacts, including noise barriers and noise-reducing road surface.

5.1 Next steps

The comments and outputs of this consultation will be used to inform the next stages of this scheme and will feed into the ongoing design of the proposed improvements, as well as feeding into any ongoing assessments. We intend to publish our Preferred Route Announcement in Autumn 2017 which will enable progression of detailed design. In the meantime, we will continue to engage with our stakeholders to discuss concerns and reflect these in the ongoing development of the scheme.

Appendix A. Consultation Brochure



A31 Ringwood improvement scheme

Public consultation



June/July 2017

Improving the A31 Ringwood:

The proposed improvements will smooth the flow of traffic and improve journey time by reducing average delays.

Introduction

About us

Highways England is the government company charged with operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A roads. Formerly the Highways Agency, we became a government-owned company in April 2015.

Have your say

We are consulting on an Option to improve the A31 at Ringwood between the A338/B3347 (Ringwood) junction and the B3081 (Verwood) junction.

Your views are important to us; they will help us to develop our proposal and understand what is important to our customers and local communities – whether you are a driver, cyclist, walker or local resident.

The consultation will run for 6 weeks from 23 June to 4 August 2017. During this time we will be holding a public exhibition over two days at Ringwood Town Council, Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood BH24 1AT. This will provide opportunity to come and meet the team and ask questions.

For full details and information please visit www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood

You can be kept informed of the scheme's progress by subscribing for updates on our web page.

Need for the scheme

The A31 is a vital section of road that connects drivers into Bournemouth and the south coast.

At peak times the road becomes congested at the Ringwood junction. This results in queues on the A31 westbound and through Ringwood on the B3347 south of the A31. If the improvements are not made, current journey times will be negatively impacted.

This improvement scheme will also look at the merging of traffic from West Street, the petrol filling station and the Fish Inn exit onto the A31. This causes safety issues.

Benefits and objectives

The biggest benefit created by the scheme is the improvement in travel time. Widening the A31 between the Ringwood junction and Verwood junction will help to reduce congestion and improve journey times.

The proposed improvements will smooth the flow of traffic and improve journey time by reducing average delays.

In terms of planning for the future and with the route already very busy, our traffic modelling shows that without intervention, by 2035 there will be even greater delays causing further congestion along the A31 at Ringwood and within the local area and town centre.

The key **benefits** are:

- **Reduced congestion and improved journey times** on the A31 westbound.
- **Improved safety** on this section of the A31 at Ringwood.
- **Improved facilities** for cyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorised users.
- **Improved air quality.**

The key **objectives** are:

- **Reduce congestion and improve journey times** on the A31 westbound between the Ringwood junction and the Verwood junction.
- **Improve safety** along the A31, particularly at the junction with West Street.
- **Improve facilities** for cyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorised users on the footway alongside the A31 and in the Ringwood town centre.

Our proposal - Option 1

Over the past year, we have been looking at three Options and assessing whether they met the objectives for this scheme, as outlined above.

Our proposal, Option 1, contains a number of elements as outlined below:

Addition of a third lane on the A31

This extra lane would be Westbound on the off-side, to the right of the existing carriageway, utilising part of the existing central reserve and will be approximately one kilometre (0.6 miles) in length.

This would relieve the existing bottleneck, where traffic slows down or comes to a stop on this section of the A31.

As part of the addition of a third lane we will have to widen the existing bridges crossing the River Avon and Bickerley Millstream. Surveys are currently being carried out on the bridges to assess their condition to inform the design.

Closure of West Street access to the A31

Currently there is a safety issue where traffic joins the A31 from West Street. The difference in speed between joining traffic and traffic already travelling on the A31 leads to lane changing and weaving manoeuvres which in turn leads to nose-to-tail 'shunt' type incidents.

To reduce the number of incidents at the junction, we propose to close West Street where it meets the A31.

We will provide space for vehicles to turn around at the end of West Street and traffic signs along approaching routes stating that there is no access to the A31 from West Street.

Our traffic surveys show that on a typical weekday, 84% of traffic using the West Street access to the A31 is using it as a short cut to avoid using the current bottleneck section of the A31. The remaining 16% is made up of people who stop in the town centre.

To improve safety, the proposal would also close the access and egress to and from the Fish Inn directly onto the A31. The access to the Fish Inn from West Street would remain open.

Reducing congestion

Our traffic data shows that currently the 1.7 mile journey from Poulner Hill (Southampton Road) to Verwood junction takes around 6 minutes, with cars averaging a speed of 17 mph. By 2020 this will reduce further to 13 mph.

With the proposed A31 Ringwood improvement, journey times will see cars average a speed of 51 mph and the journey time reducing to only 2 minutes.

By improving the movement of traffic for goods and people, Highways England will be helping to unlock future proposed developments and housing sites in south Hampshire. This will also improve the overall access to services.

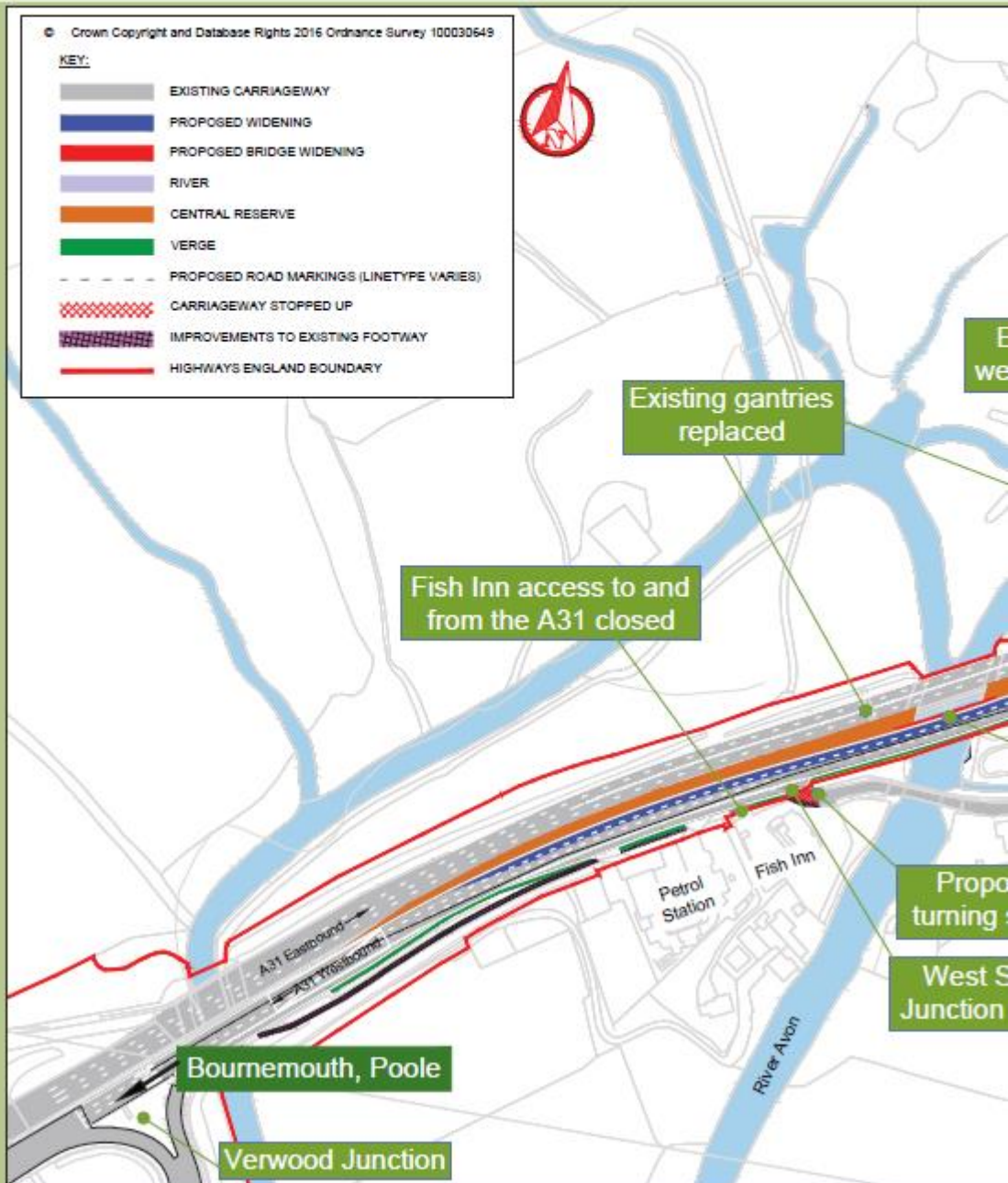
Speed limits

We are aware of some concerns locally about the speed limit on the A31. We are currently carrying out a safety review of the A31 between the Ringwood and the Verwood junctions to identify if the current speed limit of 70mph is appropriate once the proposed improvements have been implemented. The findings of the safety review will be assessed and taken into account in the scheme's developing design.

Planning for future growth

The Bournemouth / Poole / Christchurch area is the fastest-growing on the south coast. This will have an impact on the already congested A31. The New Forest Local Plan 2014 shows a significant planned increase in housing numbers in the area.

Increasing use of and rise of employment levels in and around Bournemouth Airport will place additional stress on local roads, including the A31. Levels of congestion will rise, impacting journey times further. As such, a safe and operational road will be required to meet the increasing demands of current and future traffic growth.



Improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians

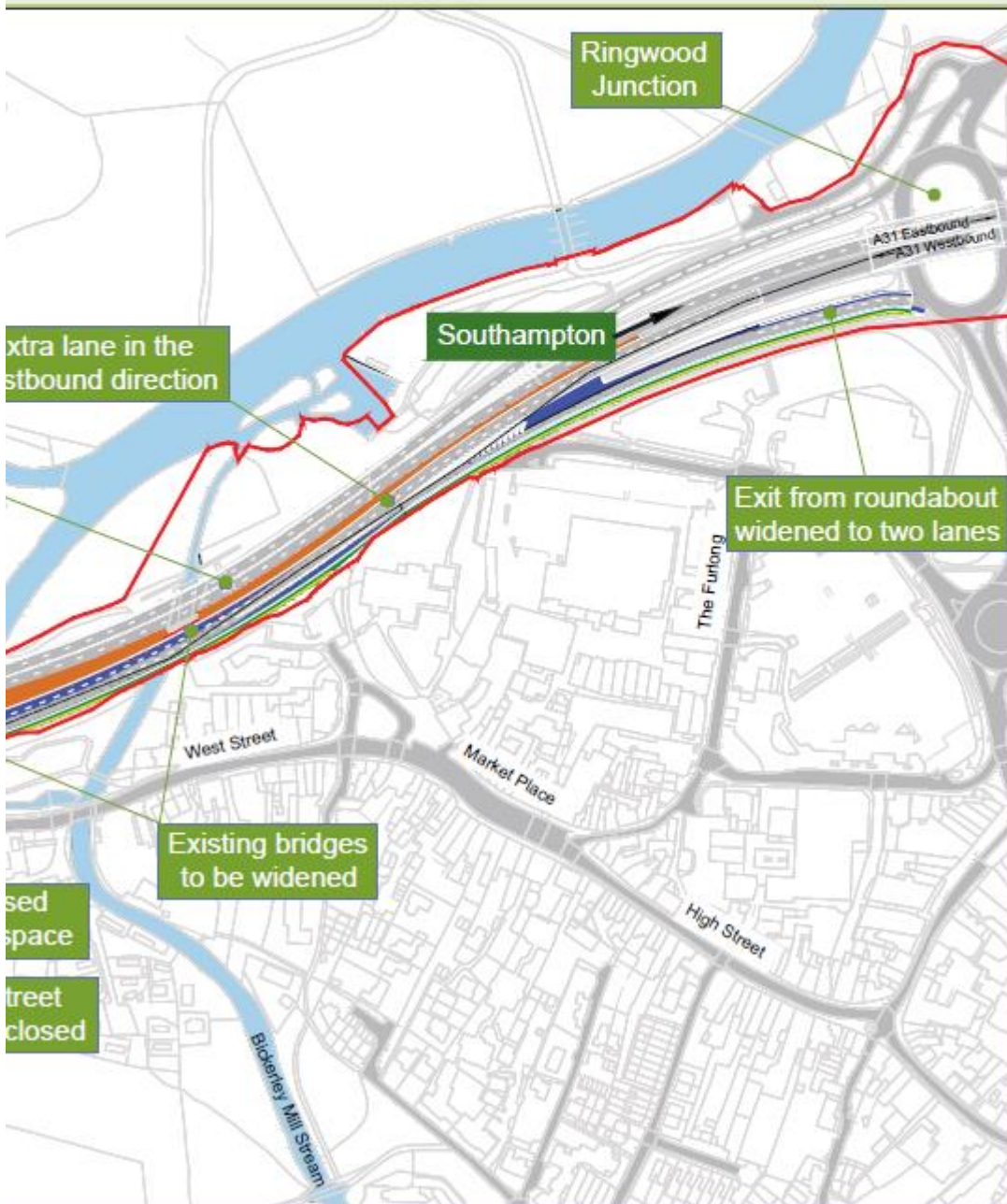
Option 1 will include improvements to the existing footway along the A31.

We are also working closely with Ringwood Town Council, Hampshire County Council and the New Forest District Council to improve the facilities for cyclists and pedestrians within the area of West Street, Market Place and the High Street,

as set out in the Town Access Plan (March 2011). Possible improvements are still being considered and will be incorporated into the scheme's future design.

Estimated Cost of scheme
£12 - £13.5 million

Construction duration
18 months



Rejected options

We have looked at two other options:

In Option 2 the access from West Street onto the A31 would not be closed but traffic calming would be introduced along West Street and the High Street to deter traffic using the West Street access. Keeping the access open would not reduce incidents on this section of the A31 and therefore Option 2 has been rejected because it would not meet the key objective for improved safety.

In Option 3 the access from West Street onto the A31 would not be closed nor would there be traffic calming implemented along West Street and the High Street. Option 3 has also been rejected because it would not meet the key objective for improved safety.

As a result, we are not taking Options 2 and 3 forward to consultation.

Environmental considerations

We have carried out an assessment of environmental aspects which include:

- Air Quality
- Noise
- Cultural Heritage
- The local landscape (Ecology)
- People and Communities

The next stage of the project will be to look at the environmental impacts in more detail, as well as necessary solutions and enhancement measures. Below are some of the environmental topics that have been considered to date.

Air quality

There are no Air Quality Management Areas within the local area.

Although there may be some changes in local air quality during construction and when the scheme is completed, we do not expect this to be significant. We will be carrying out further studies and calculations during the next stage of the scheme design.





Noise

There are three Noise Important Areas within close proximity to the proposed scheme. With the scheme completed, there is the potential for adverse or beneficial effects depending on traffic flows and mitigation measures undertaken. Further studies and calculations will be carried out in the next stage with mitigation options considered and developed during detailed design.

Cultural heritage

There are several heritage locations and buildings in the area which we are aware of. At this stage we do not see any of them being affected as part of the proposals for this scheme.

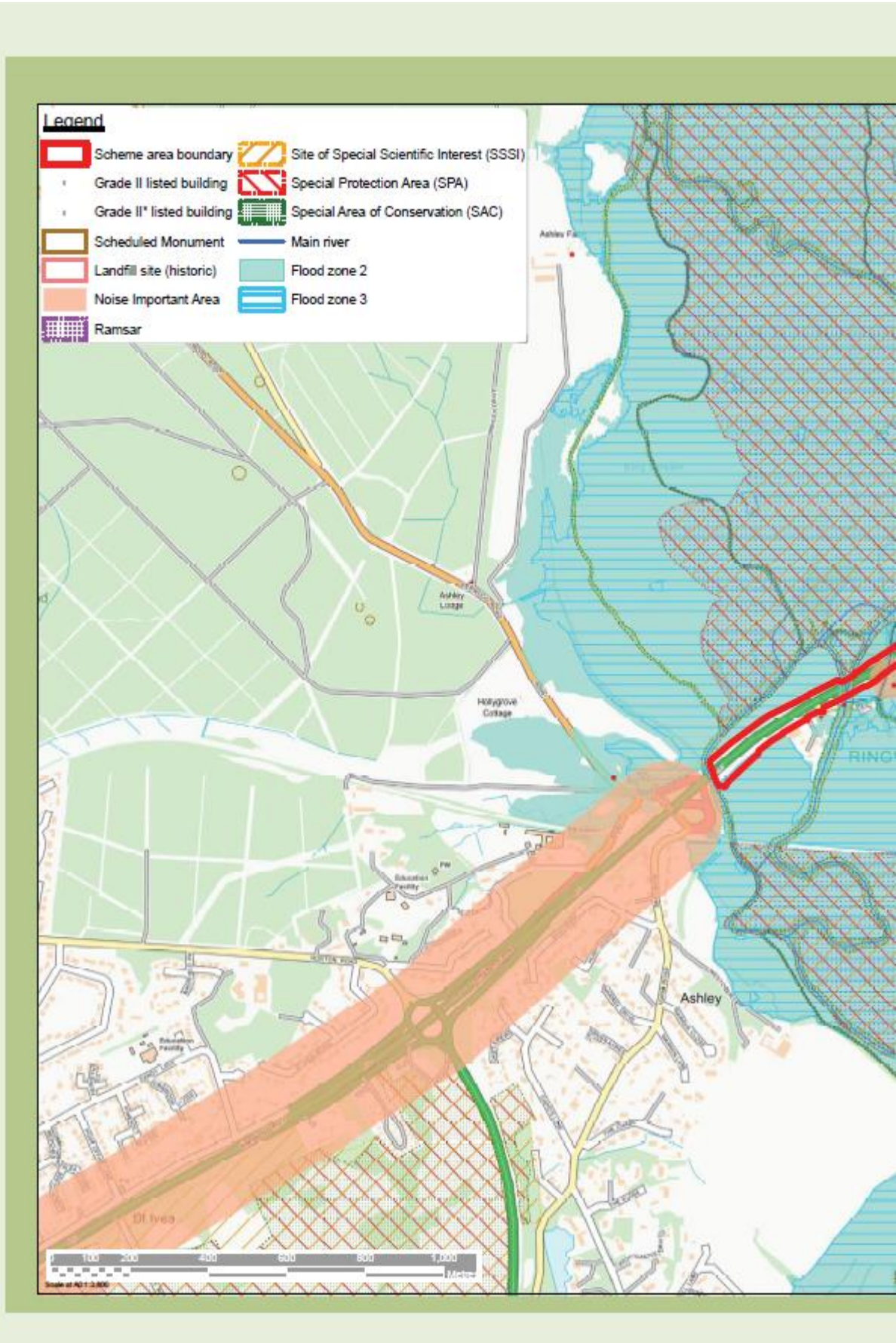
Ecology

We have already carried out ecology surveys and we are particularly aware of spawning salmon in the River Avon. Our construction programme will take account of this in consultation with the Environment Agency.

People and communities

Possible impacts that could affect the local community during construction are:

- Temporary reduced speed limit on the A31 for the safety of our road workers and of the travelling public.
- Temporary loss of the footway alongside the A31 while it is improved as part of the scheme.
- Temporary lane closure on the A31 Westbound alongside a temporary contraflow to facilitate construction of the scheme.
- Overnight road closures on the A31 will be required from time to time to facilitate construction. Diversion will be put in place to allow motorists to continue their journey during the closures.



Environmental map



Details of public exhibitions

To give you a chance to meet the team and ask us questions, we are holding a public exhibition at:

Ringwood Town Council, Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood BH24 1AT

Friday 30 June from 15:00 until 20:00

Saturday 01 July from 10:00 until 16:00

Come down and see us, get more information about the schemes, and ask any questions you have about the proposals.

Alternatively, pick up a brochure and questionnaire from:

- Ringwood Town Council office
- New Forest District Council office
- Ringwood Library
- Ringwood Health & Leisure Centre
- Motorway Service Area at Picket Post

How will you use my response?

All views and comments received help us to:

- ensure the final scheme design is updated with all relevant responses where applicable and to make sure potential impacts on the community and environment have been fully considered
- ensure the final environmental assessment takes into account impacts and mitigation measures you have told us about
- record how we have considered feedback to develop the scheme further within our public consultation report

What happens after the consultation

Views and comments received during the consultation will be considered and summarised in our Public Consultation Report. Following an announcement of our results, we will develop detailed design proposals for the scheme. This will include surveys and investigations to allow us to design the scheme in more detail.

- Full Public Consultation – 23 June 2017 to 4 August 2017
- Announcement of results following the Consultation – October 2017
- We are currently assessing the significant programme of improvement works to be delivered by Highways England in south Hampshire to ensure the sequencing minimises the disruption to the travelling public, affected communities and businesses.

Next steps

We want to hear your views by **04 August 2017**.

Please tell us what you think by:

- **completing the questionnaire included** with this brochure and returning it to FREEPOST A31 Ringwood
- **completing the consultation questionnaire online** at www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood

If you have questions, you can:

- **attend one of our public events** where you can also pick up a questionnaire to fill in
- **email** A31Ringwood@highwaysengland.co.uk
- **call us** on 0300 123 5000



West Street intersection with the A31

We look forward to hearing from you

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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This document is also available on our website at www.gov.uk/highways

If you have any enquiries about this publication email info@highwaysengland.co.uk or call **0300 123 5000**. Please quote the Highways England publications code PR25/17.

Highways England Creative S170097

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Appendix B. Consultation Questionnaire



A31 Ringwood improvement scheme

Have your say

Questionnaire



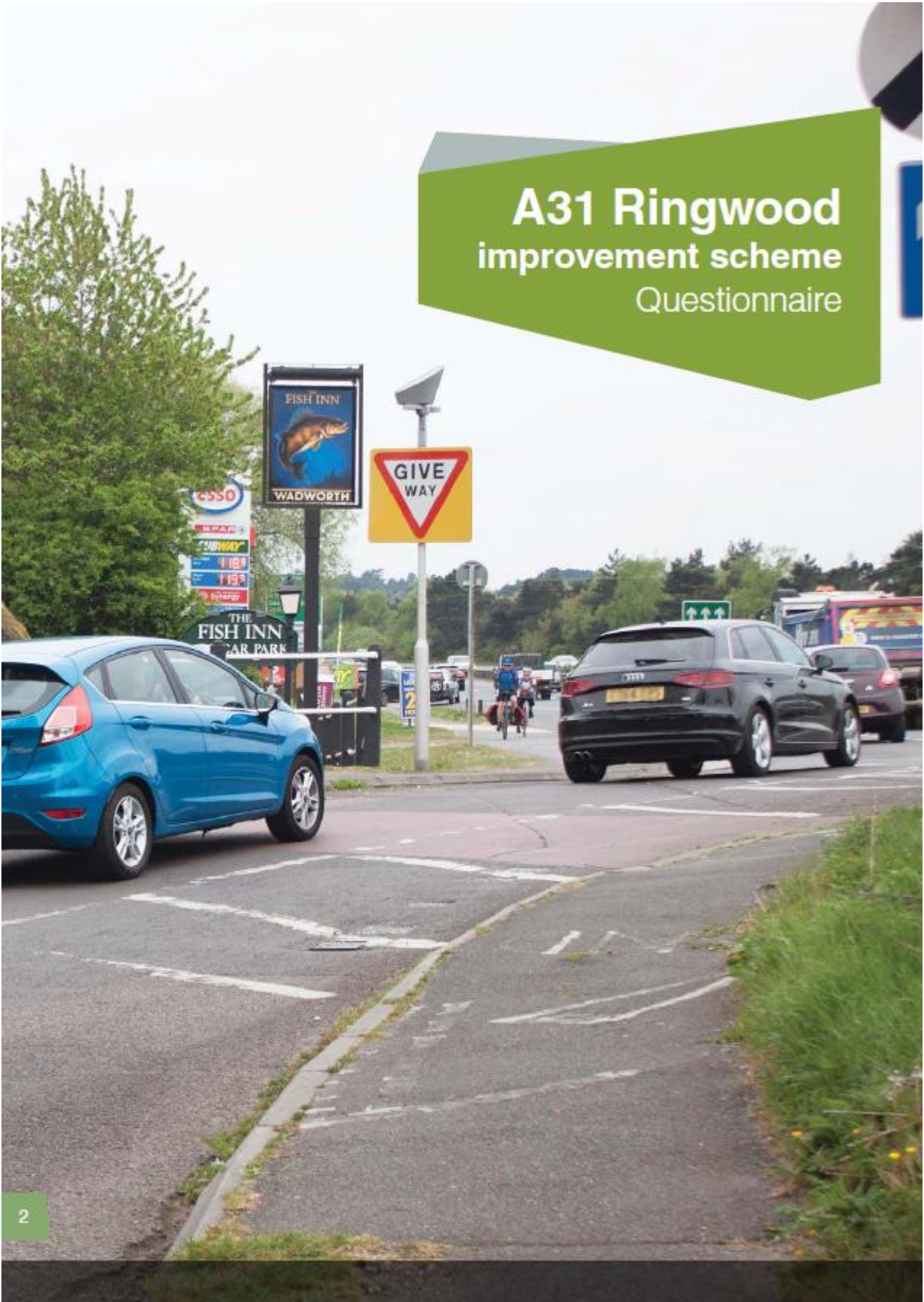
Contact information

Please complete this questionnaire and return to us by Friday 4 August 2017, using our freepost address: **FREEPOST A31 Ringwood**

You can also:

- complete this consultation questionnaire online at www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood
- email A31Ringwood@highwaysengland.co.uk
- call **0300 123 5000** 9:00am - 5:00pm, Monday to Friday







A31 Ringwood improvement scheme questionnaire

Please return this questionnaire to any of our public consultation exhibitions or by posting it to **FREEPOST A31 Ringwood** by 4 August 2017. Alternatively, you can complete the questionnaire online anytime until 11:59pm on 4 August 2017 via www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood

Please complete your contact details below. If you prefer not to give these, it would still really help us if you can provide your postcode.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone (optional): _____

Email (optional): _____

Organisation (if applicable): _____

Please note: The information you provide will be kept in a secure environment only accessible by Highways England and the specific contractor(s) working with us on this project. Your personal information will not be shared with any other individuals or organisations, beyond the provisions set out in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Regulations Act 2004. The information you submit will only be used in support of the purpose specified in this survey. Personal details are collected only to ensure entries are not duplicated and in order to contact correspondents if necessary. All personal details will be deleted at the end of the survey analysis period.

Your travel habits regarding the A31 Ringwood

1. How often do you currently use the A31 between Ringwood and Verwood Junction? (Please tick)

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than once a month	Never
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. When do you usually travel? (Please tick all that apply)

Weekday morning peak (7am to 9am)	Weekday evening peak (5pm to 7pm)	Weekday off peak (all other times)	Weekends anytime
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. How do you normally travel on the route (Please tick all that apply): ✓

<input type="checkbox"/> Car/Van	<input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle	<input type="checkbox"/> Bus/Coach
<input type="checkbox"/> HGV/LGV	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____	

4. What do you usually use the A31 Ringwood for? (Please tick all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Travelling to and from work	<input type="checkbox"/> Travelling for business
<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> Leisure/recreation/holidays
<input type="checkbox"/> School drop-off/pick-up	<input type="checkbox"/> Long distance journeys (greater than 10 miles)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____	

5. Do you think any of the following apply to your current travel conditions on the A31 at Ringwood?

<input type="checkbox"/> Long delays regularly occur
<input type="checkbox"/> Journey times are unpredictable and vary
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequent incidents result in injury
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequent incidents result in delays
<input type="checkbox"/> Air and noise pollution
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe and inconvenient walking and cycling conditions
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____

6. How close do you live to the proposed A31 Ringwood improvement?

<input type="checkbox"/> Under 2 miles
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 and 5 miles
<input type="checkbox"/> Over 5 miles

About the scheme

7. Do you think there is a need to improve the A31 at Ringwood? (Please tick)

Yes No

8. Overall, to what extent do you agree with the proposed Option?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral or undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree

9. Which issues around the A31 Ringwood improvement are you most concerned about? (Select all relevant)

	Very concerned	Concerned	Neutral or undecided	Not concerned
Safety on the A31				
Congestion on the A31 between Ringwood and Verwood Junction				
Reliability of journey times on the A31				
Environmental impact of congestion on the A31				

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the A31 Ringwood improvement scheme will achieve the scheme objectives?

Objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral or undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Improve safety along the route					
Reduce congestion on the A31 westbound for commuters					
Reduce congestion on the A31 westbound for holiday traffic					
Reduce traffic using Ringwood town centre					

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the closure of access from West Street to the A31 will achieve the scheme objectives?

Objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral or undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Improve safety along the route					
Reduce congestion and improve journey times on the A31 westbound					

12. Do you believe that the closure of the access to the A31 from West Street will have an impact on local businesses, on both West Street and Ringwood in general?

Yes No Uncertain

13. Do you understand the justification for Options 2 and 3 being rejected?

Yes No

if 'No' please specify a reason

14. Do you have any further comments or observations that you think we should consider?

Consultation

15 Did you find the public exhibition useful in answering your questions? (Please tick) ✓

Yes	To a certain extent	No	Did not attend
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Have you found the consultation materials useful in answering your questions? (Please tick) ✓

Yes	To a certain extent	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

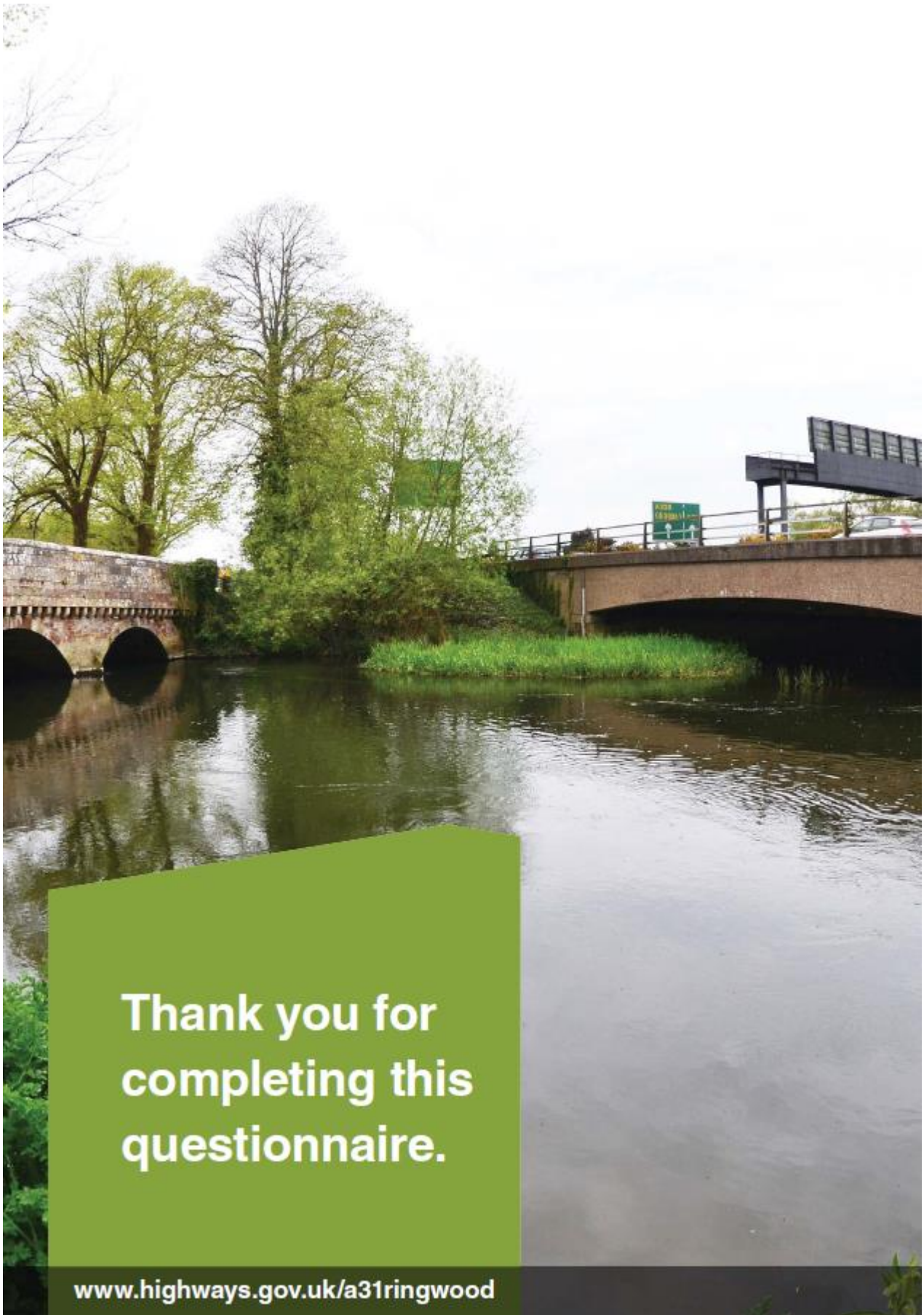
17. How did you find out about the A31 Ringwood public consultation? (Please tick all that apply) ✓

- Letter through the door
- Local newspaper/radio
- Highways England website
- Poster
- Local community group
- Word of mouth through a friend/neighbour
- Other (please specify)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

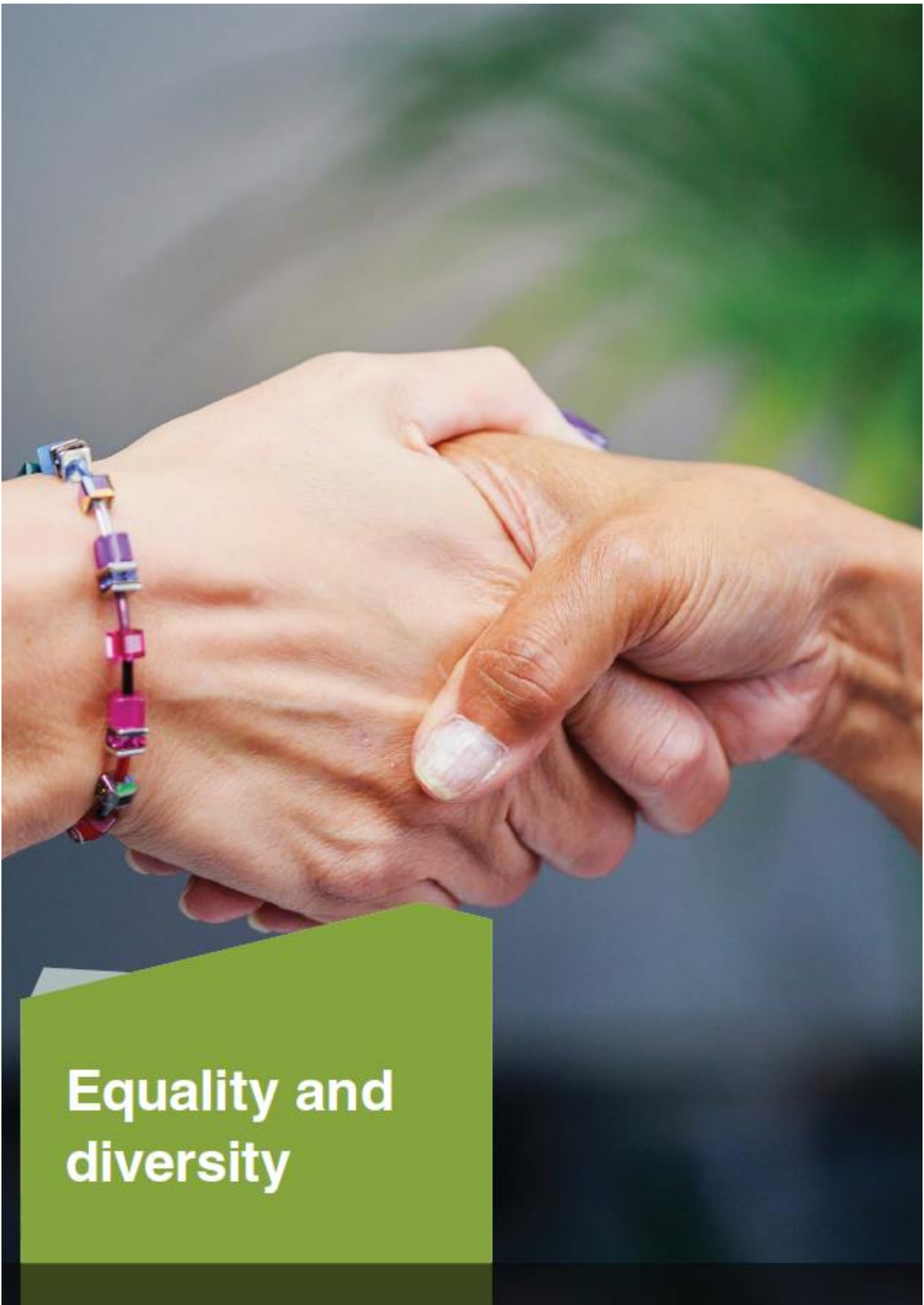
Please return this questionnaire to any of our public consultation exhibitions, or place in an envelope and post it to **FREEPOST A31 Ringwood** by Friday 4 August 2017.

All consultation questionnaires received are formally recorded and in accordance with data protection your personal details are used solely in connection with the consultation process.



**Thank you for
completing this
questionnaire.**

www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood



**Equality and
diversity**

Equality and diversity

To ensure we are meeting our diversity guidelines please help us by filling in the following section of this questionnaire. You are not obliged to complete this; the information will only be used by Highways England to monitor its effectiveness at consulting with the whole community. This information will not be used for any other purpose and in publishing the results individuals will not be identified.

Age Gender Male Female

Please tick the box if you are Disabled

Ethnic origin

Section A

British or Mixed British

- English
- Irish
- Scottish
- Welsh

Or any other? (specify if you wish) _____

Section B

Asian

- A Bangladeshi
- B Indian
- C Pakistan
- D any other Asian background? (specify if you wish) _____

Black

- E African
- F Caribbean
- G any other African background? (specify if you wish) _____

Chinese

- H any other Chinese background? (specify if you wish) _____

Mixed Ethnic background

- I Asian and White
- J Black African and White
- K Black Caribbean and White
- L any other Mixed Ethnic background? (specify if you wish) _____

White

- M any other White background? (specify if you wish) _____

Ethnic background

- N any other Ethnic background? (specify if you wish) _____

Religion or Belief

Do you follow a particular religion or hold a religious or similar philosophical belief?

Yes No Prefer not to say

If Yes please specify

Do you have any physical or mental health condition or illness

Yes No Prefer not to say

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

Contact us

If you have any queries relating to the A31 Ringwood improvement scheme please contact us at **A31Ringwood@highwaysengland.co.uk**

For the latest information and updates, please visit our website **www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood**

If you have any queries relating to Highways England, you should contact our customer contact centre on **0300 123 5000** or email **info@highwaysengland.co.uk**

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This document is also available on our website at www.gov.uk/highways

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Highways England, Creative S170097

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Appendix C. Consultation Exhibition Boards





Welcome
to the A31 Ringwood
Improvement Scheme
public consultation

Existing gantries replaced

Extra lane in the westbound direction

Southampton

West Street

Market Place

Petrol Station

Fish Inn

River Ave

Barnwood Lane

Proposed turning Head

West Street Junction closed

Existing bridges to be widened

Please come in to view our proposal
and meet the team.

www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood



The need for improvement

The A31 is a vital section of road that connects drivers into Bournemouth and the south coast.

At peak times the road becomes congested at the A338/A31 Ringwood junction. This results in queues on the A31 westbound and through Ringwood on the B3347 Mansfield Road south of the A31.

If the improvements are not made, current journey times will be negatively impacted.

This improvement scheme will also look at the merging of traffic joining the A31 between West Street and the Verwood Junction. This causes safety issues.





Our Proposal

Addition of a third lane on the A31 westbound

This would relieve the existing bottleneck where traffic slows down or comes to a stop. This widening will include the existing bridges crossing the River Avon and Bickerly Mill Stream.

Closure of West Street and the Fish Inn accesses to the A31

To reduce the number of incidents at the junction, we propose to close West Street where it meets the A31. This will include closing the access and egress to and from the Fish Inn directly onto the A31. The access from the Fish Inn to West Street would remain open.

Improve facilities for cyclists, pedestrians and non-motorised road users.

The proposed scheme will include improvements to the existing footway alongside the A31 and in the Ringwood town centre.



Scheme benefits and objectives

Benefits of the improvement can come from:

- Reduced congestion and improved journey times on the A31 westbound.
- Improved safety on this section of the A31 at Ringwood.
- Improve facilities for cyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorised users on the footway alongside the A31 and in the Ringwood town centre.
- Improved air quality.





Environmental considerations

Air Quality

There are no Air Quality Management Areas within the local area.

Noise

There are three Noise Important Areas within close proximity to the proposed scheme.

Cultural Heritage

We do not see any of the several heritage locations in the area being affected by the proposed scheme.

Ecology

We are aware of spawning salmon in the River Avon and will continue to consult with the Environment Agency to minimise any impacts on the local environment.

People and Communities

We will minimise, where possible, any potential impact that could affect the local community during construction.





Have your say

The consultation will run from **23 June to 4 August 2017**.

You can provide feedback in a number of ways:

- Completing the consultation questionnaire online at: www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood
- Completing the questionnaire provided within the brochure and returning it to **FREEPOST A31 Ringwood**

The final date we will accept responses will be midnight Friday 4 August 2017.

If you have questions, you can:

- Email A31Ringwood@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Call us on **0300 123 5000**

Thank you for attending the public consultation event.

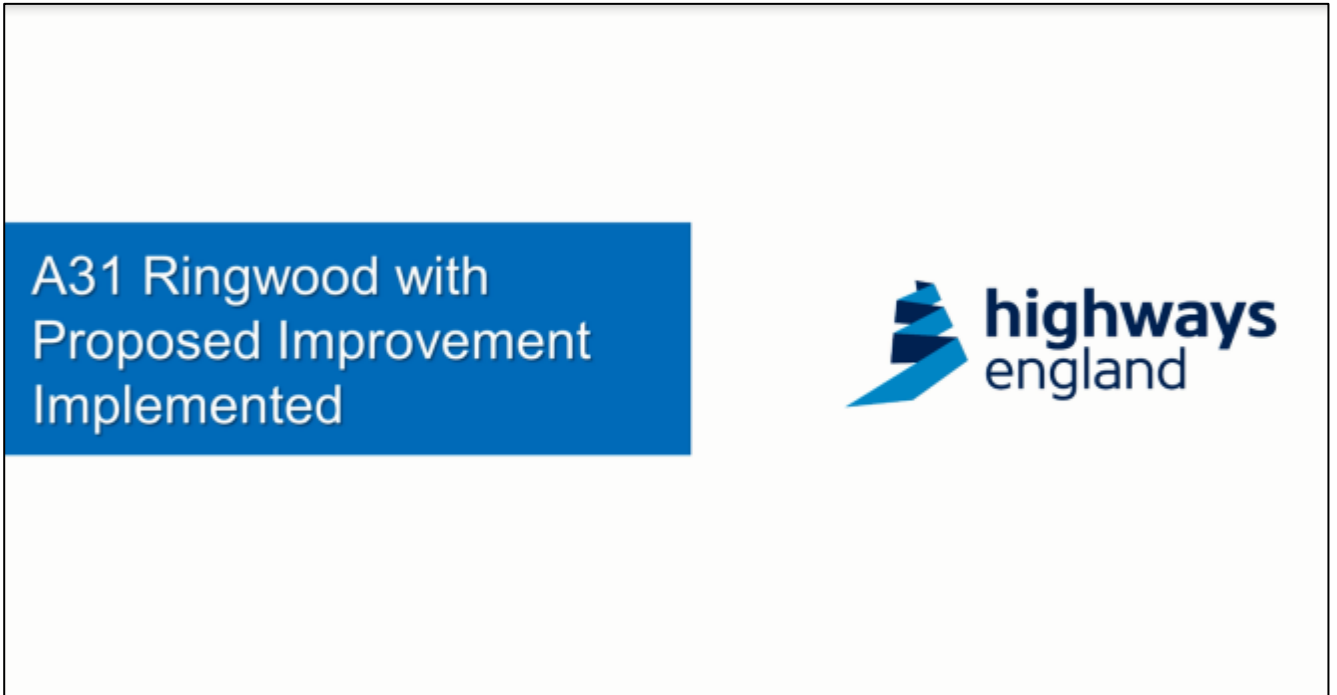


What happens next

All views and comments received during the consultation will be considered and summarised in our Public Consultation Report.

- Full Public Consultation – 23 June 2017 to 4 August 2017
- Announcement of results following the Consultation – October 2017
- We are currently assessing the significant programme of improvement works to be delivered by Highways England in south Hampshire to ensure the sequencing minimises the disruption to the travelling public, affected communities and businesses.

Appendix D. Traffic Modelling Screenshots





Appendix E. Letters to Business



Sir/Madam

XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX

Ringwood

15 June 2017

Our Ref: A31 Ringwood

Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation on the A31 Ringwood Improvements Scheme

Highways England will shortly be consulting on an option to improve the A31 Ringwood between the A338/B3347 Ringwood junction and the B3081 Verwood junction.

We are working to improve this stretch of road in order to reduce congestion, improve journey times and safety, alongside improving cyclist and pedestrian facilities in Ringwood Town centre.

As part of our consultation we are writing to all businesses and residents near to the A31 to inform them of the consultation, and to encourage you all to get involved and let us know what you think.

Your views are important to us and they will help us to develop our proposal and understand what is important to our customers and local communities – whether you are a driver, cyclist, walker, local resident or business.

The public consultation period is due to start on Friday 23 June and run for 6 weeks until 4 August 2017.

A copy of the scheme brochure will be made available at Ringwood Town Council, Ringwood Library, New Forest District Council, Ringwood Leisure Centre and on our website www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood from the first date of consultation.

We will also be holding a public exhibition open to everyone to provide an opportunity to come and meet the team and ask us questions in person. This will be taking place at:

Ringwood Town Council, Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood BH24 1AT

Friday 30 June from 15:00 until 20:00

Saturday 01 July from 10:00 until 16:00

For full details and information please visit www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood

You can be kept informed of the schemes progress by subscribing to our web page.

If you would like to speak to someone before the 23 June then please contact David Silvey or Gabrielle Elia from our consultant team Jacobs on the numbers below:

David Silvey	0207 3782 811
Gabrielle Elia	0207 3782 870

Yours sincerely,



Neil Andrew, Senior Project Manager

Appendix F. Bournemouth Echo advertisement

16 Friday, June 23, 2017

DAILY ECHO

NEWS

dailyecho.co.uk

fb.com/dailyecho @dailyecho

IN BRIEF

Teens set out stalls

TEENAGE talent will be on show at a host of events in Romsey this summer.

The Teenage Market, run by Romsey Town Council, gives young traders and performers a chance to showcase their products and talents for free at the Town Hall in the Market Place.

The next one takes place on Saturday July 8 as part of the Beggars Fair Youth Festival.

The events are then planned for Sundays when a Hampshire Farmers Market is on on Sunday August 6 and Sunday September 3, which coincides with Romsey Food Festival.

Everything from craft to cakes will be on offer.

To apply for a stall, visit teenagemarket.co.uk.

Win a £25k cash boost for your good cause

NOMINATIONS are open for a grant of up to £25,000.

The OneFamily Community Awards are open to community organisations who are in need of a cash boost.

With four different categories aimed at giving funds to projects that will benefit good causes, there are four different categories.

Health, disability and social care; lifelong learning; active living and community groups.

Each category will have eight winners with four projects receiving up to £5,000, three pro-

Rachel Adams



jects winning up to £10,000 and one project scooping £25,000.

The cash comes from OneFamily, a financial services provider based on the south coast.

Previous winners include Abbotswood Junior School in Totton, which renovated its library after winning a £25,000 award.

Karl Elliott, customer strategy director at OneFamily said:



Last year's OneFamily award winners from Abbotswood Junior School who renovated their library with the cash

"We're urging our customers across Hampshire to get involved and nominate a good cause that could benefit from a financial grant.

"As we are owned by our customers we want to do more than just provide great products.

"We want to help our customers, their families and the communities where they live in other ways, and our OneFamily Foundation enables us to do just that.

"The Community Awards are a big part of the Foundation's work, and each year we give hundreds of thousands of pounds to projects close to our customers' hearts.

"In 2016, we touched the lives of more than 100,000 people through the awards, and this year we want to help even more – giving even more people and communities the chance to get involved.

"Projects must be nominated to be in with a chance of winning, so I want to encourage OneFamily customers across Hampshire to get involved and nominate the good causes that mean the most to them."

Nominations for the awards close on July 10.

OneFamily customers can nominate their local project by visiting onefamily.com/your-foundation/community-awards/



Consultation on the A31 Ringwood Improvement Scheme

The consultation on the A31 Ringwood Improvement Scheme between the A338/B3347 Ringwood junction and the B3081 Verwood junction is about to begin.

The consultation opens on 23 June 2017 and closes on 4 August 2017.

Come down to get more information about the scheme, and ask any questions you have about the proposal at:

Ringwood Town Council, Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood BH24 1AT

On:

Friday 30 June from 3:00pm until 8:00pm

Saturday 1 July from 10:00am until 4:00pm

Alternatively, pick up a brochure and questionnaire from:

Ringwood Town Council office

New Forest District Council office

Ringwood Library

Ringwood Health & Leisure Centre

Motorway Service Area at Picket Post

If you have questions, you can:

Attend one of our public events where you can also pick up a questionnaire to fill in

Find full details online at www.highways.gov.uk/a31ringwood

Email us at A31Ringwood@highwaysengland.co.uk

Call us on 0300 123 5000

We look forward to hearing from you

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