

# A31 Ringwood improvement scheme

Public consultation



## 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](http://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.

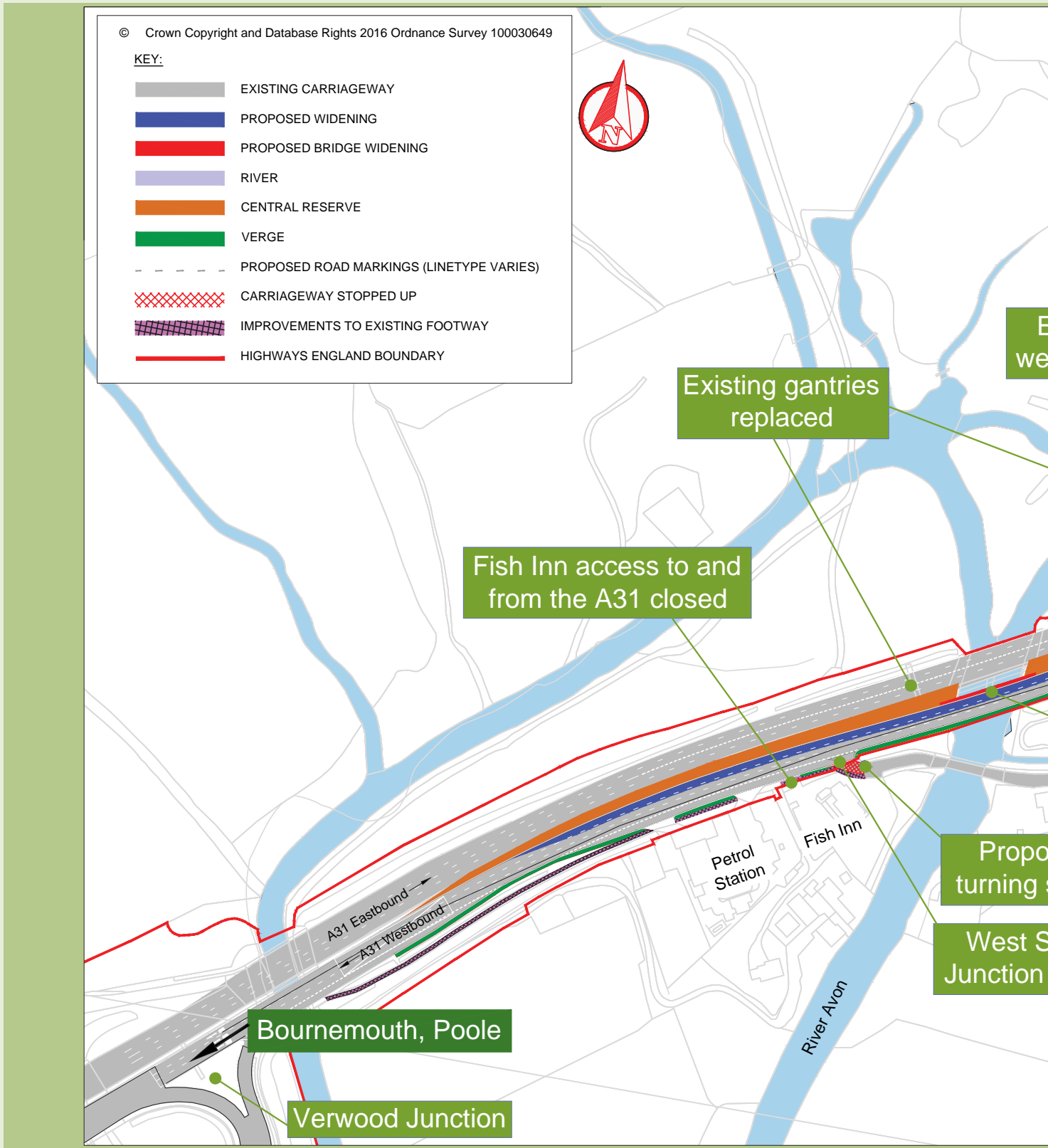
### Speed limits

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

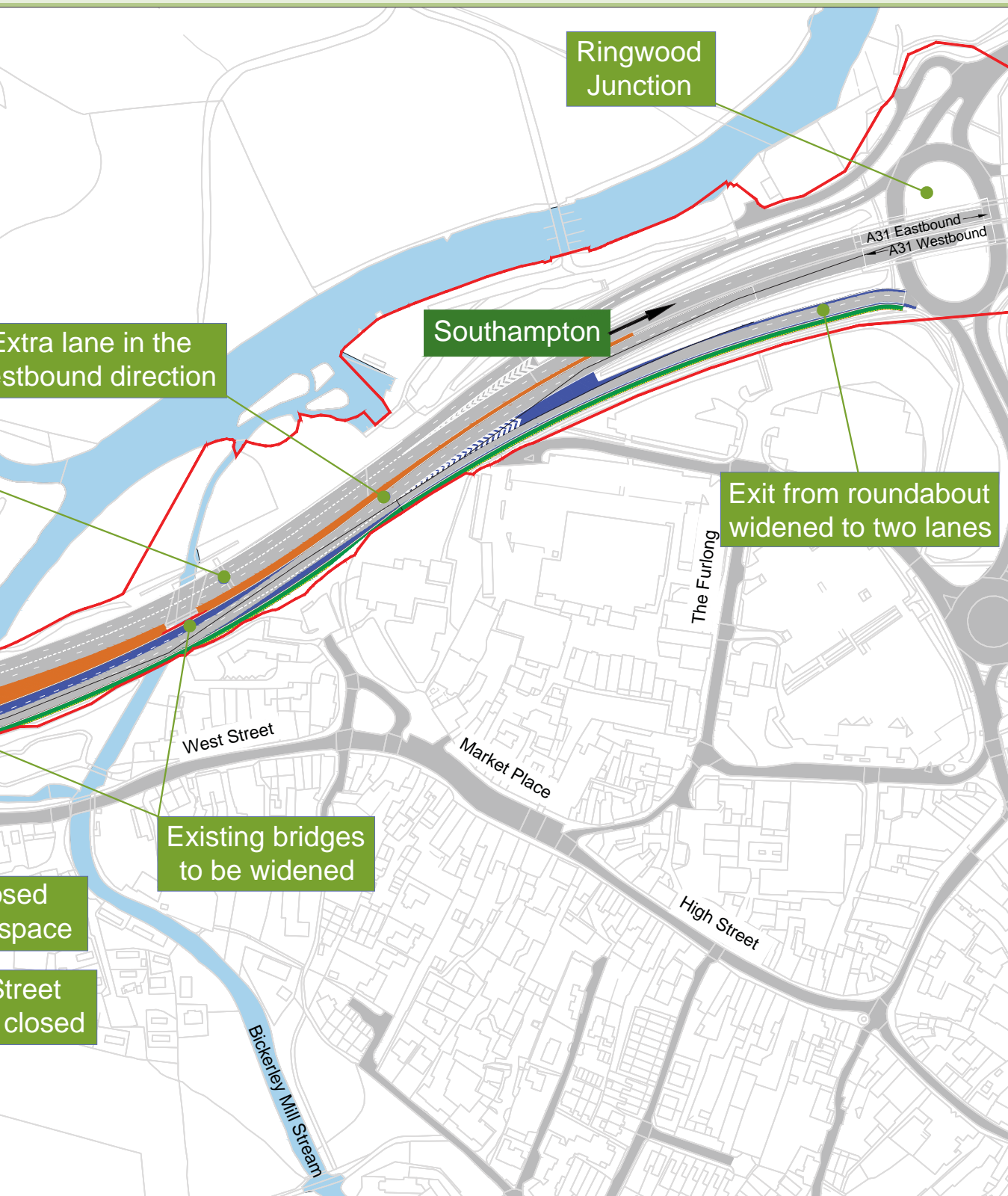
Option 1 will include improvements to the existing footway along the A31.

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:

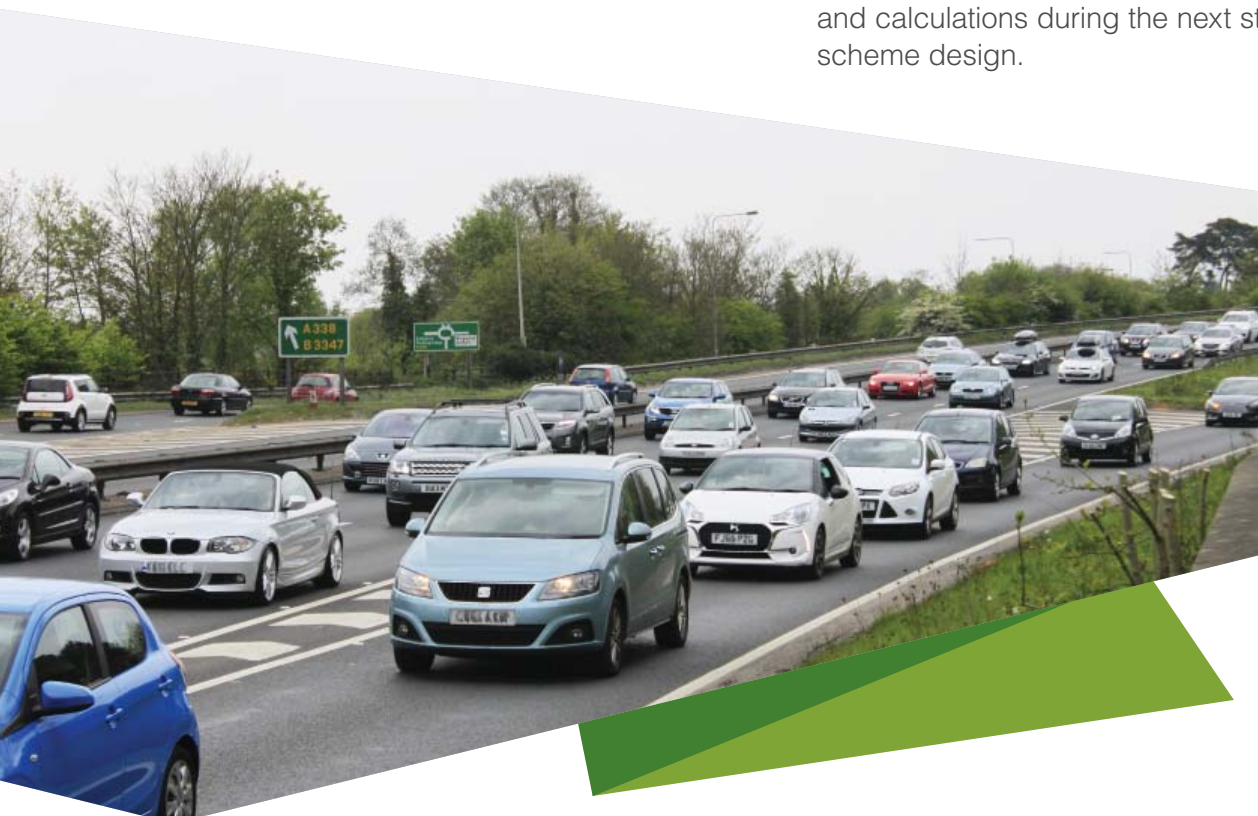
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Cultural Heritage
- The local landscape (Ecology)
- People and Communities

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

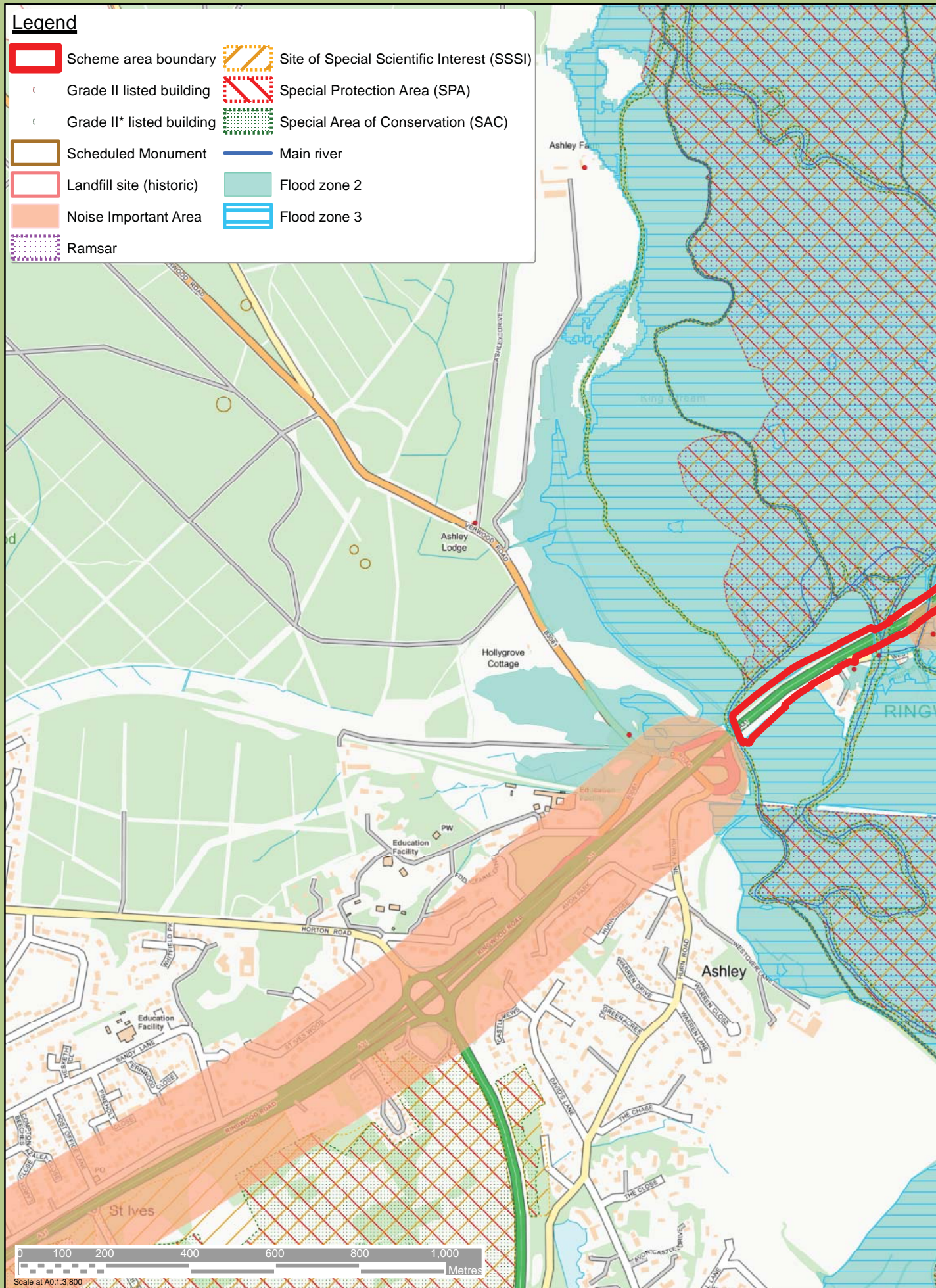
Possible impacts that could affect the local community during construction are:

- 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.



**Legend**

-  Scheme area boundary
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
-  Grade II listed building
-  Special Protection Area (SPA)
-  Grade II\* listed building
-  Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Main river
-  Landfill site (historic)
-  Flood zone 2
-  Noise Important Area
-  Flood zone 3
-  Ramsar





# 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](http://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](mailto: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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