



A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)

1 About us

- 1.1 We operate, maintain, and improve England's motorways and major A-roads, known as the strategic road network. The A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme is a critical part of our ongoing investment and will improve connectivity in the South West and Somerset, reduce journey times and unlock local and regional economic growth.
- 1.2 We are publishing this Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) to outline our approach to consulting with the local community for the above scheme. It provides details about how you (the local community) can take part and how feedback will be used to influence our proposed design.
- 1.3 To make sure our approach to consultation with the local community is comprehensive, we have consulted on this SoCC with Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council and South Somerset District Council. These are the local authorities in the areas in which the scheme is proposed to be built and/or the scheme may significantly impact.
- 1.4 This document also gives you the background to the scheme and how our application to build it will progress.

2 Our application

- 2.1 The scheme is being developed under the Planning Act 2008 and we are publishing this SoCC under Section 47 (duty to consult local community) of that Act.
- 2.2 Under the Planning Act 2008, we are required to make an application to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to build this scheme. The Planning Inspectorate will examine our application and the Secretary of State will decide whether the scheme should go ahead based on a recommendation made by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 2.3 We anticipate that we will submit our DCO application for the scheme in 2022.
- 2.4 A matter the Secretary of State must have regard to when assessing our DCO application is the National Networks National Policy Statement (NNNPS). The NNNPS sets out the need for development of road projects on the national networks and is the policy against which decisions on major road projects will be made.
- 2.5 When we submit our application, the Planning Inspectorate must consider whether our consultation has been adequate. The best time for you to have your say to inform our final design on this scheme is now by taking part in this consultation.
- 2.6 You can find more information about the Planning Inspectorate and the Planning Act 2008 on their National Infrastructure Planning website: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk> or by calling the Planning Inspectorate on 0303 444 5000.

3 The scheme

- 3.1 The A303/A358 route provides vital east-west connectivity between the South West and London and the South East for people, communities and businesses. However, there are six predominantly single carriageway sections (including the A358 Taunton to Southfields) where road users suffer congestion and long delays.
- 3.2 In recognition that the road is holding back the potential of the South West's economy, the government, in its first Road Investment Strategy (RIS1) published in 2014, set out the intention to transform connectivity by upgrading the A303/A358 corridor to a high-quality dual carriageway from the M3 motorway to the M5 motorway at Taunton. The need for the improvement was then further referenced in the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) published in 2020.
- 3.3 As part of this, we are proposing to upgrade an approximately 8.5 mile section of the A358 between the M5 at Taunton and the Southfields roundabout on the A303 to a high-quality dual carriageway. Once upgraded, the route will reduce congestion, in particular at peak times, enhance user safety and improve connectivity both locally and to the wider South West region.
- 3.4 Owing to its status as a nationally significant infrastructure project, an Environmental Impact Assessment is being completed. A Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report and non-technical summary (NTS) will be published at the point of consultation, which will provide information about the potential environmental effects of the scheme and the measures proposed to reduce those effects. The main PEI Report chapters are as follows:
- Chapter 1: Introduction
 - Chapter 2: The Project
 - Chapter 3: Alternatives
 - Chapter 4: Assessment Methodology
 - Chapter 5: Air Quality
 - Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage
 - Chapter 7: Landscape
 - Chapter 8: Biodiversity
 - Chapter 9: Geology and Soils
 - Chapter 10: Material Assets and Waste
 - Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration
 - Chapter 12: Population and Health
 - Chapter 13: Road Drainage and the Water Environment
 - Chapter 14: Climate
 - Chapter 15: Assessment of Cumulative Effects
- 3.5 Additional information about the scheme, including plans and information, will be included in our public consultation booklet. Copies of the booklet will be available during the consultation period on the scheme webpage, in hard copy at designated public information points and by request as described in section 9 of this SoCC.

4 **Consulting the community and previous consultations**

- 4.1 We have already carried out two rounds of non-statutory consultation in the vicinity of the scheme. We carried out an initial non-statutory consultation between March and July 2017 when we presented and consulted on a single route option.
- 4.2 Feedback from this initial consultation included a wish to see more options for connecting with the M5, for providing traffic relief for Henlade and for connecting more directly with the 'Nexus 25' development. This feedback was carefully considered and informed the decision that it would be beneficial for us to undertake a supplementary consultation and seek further views on the whole scheme with alternative options presented. Three options for improvement were subsequently presented at a second non-statutory public consultation in January and February 2018.
- 4.3 The design was further developed following feedback on the options received from the second non-statutory public consultation. In June 2019 we made our preferred route announcement.
- 4.4 More details of the previous consultations are available to view and download at: www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields.

5 Next consultation – why and when

5.1 It is important to us that our consultation should:

- enable members of the public to influence our proposals
- provide the opportunity to give feedback on potential options
- encourage the community to help shape our proposals to maximise local benefits and minimise any downsides
- help local people understand the potential nature and local impact of our proposals
- enable potential mitigation measures to be considered and, if appropriate, built into the project before an application is submitted
- identify ways in which our proposals, without significant costs, support wider strategic or local objectives

5.2 Your comments will help us achieve these objectives. We will listen to everyone's views and will consider your opinions before we submit our DCO application.

5.3 The consultation will run from **Tuesday 12 October 2021 until Monday 22 November 2021, at 23:59.**

5.4 The consultation will be on our preliminary design for the preferred route. We are consulting on all aspects of the preliminary design, but welcome comments in particular on:

- upgrades to the M5 junction 25 and the Nexus roundabout
- a new two-lane bridge to carry Stoke Road over the A358
- a new junction at Mattock's Tree Green
- a new connection to provide access for the Somerset Progressive School, the Huish Woods Scout Campsite and local businesses at Nightingale Farm Units
- a new connection linking Village Road to the Mattock's Tree Green junction to provide access to Hatch Beauchamp for residents and local businesses
- an additional bridge at Griffin Lane to carry the eastbound A358 carriageway
- a new two-lane bridge to carry Bickenhall Lane over the A358
- a new bridge to carry Village Road over the A358
- options to provide a connection, or not, between local villages at Capland
- a new junction at Ashill
- a new connection on the eastern side of the A358 to connect Stewley with the Ashill junction
- Southfields roundabout connection and improvements
 - proposals for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and disabled users, including a new cycle route that would run from Henlade to the Southfields roundabout making use of the local road network and new off-road routes
- proposals for construction phasing
- the information and proposed mitigation presented in the PEI Report

5.5 Working with Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council and Somerset West and Taunton Council, we have developed a consultation mailing zone for the distribution of our consultation materials. Residential and business

addresses within the mailing zone will receive direct correspondence before and at the start of the consultation period, as described in section 7 of this SoCC.

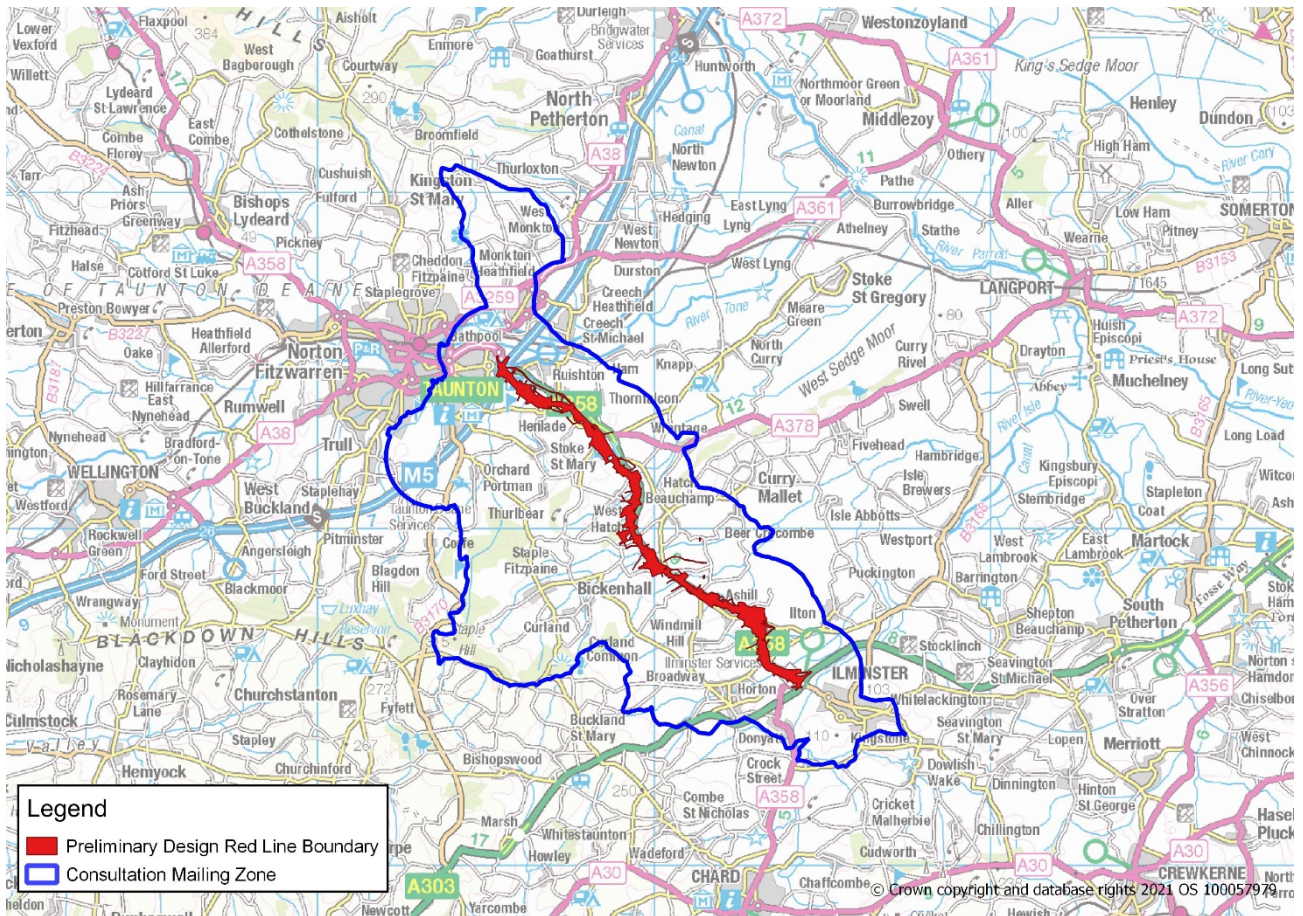
5.6 The consultation mailing zone is defined by:

- all addresses included in the mailing zone used for the 2018 options consultation
- all addresses within a 1.5km (0.9 mile) radius of the extent of preliminary design (the red line boundary)
- all addresses that fall within the host civil parishes for the scheme – those whose boundaries are within the red line boundary
- where there is no host civil parish, all addresses in the equivalent district council ward

5.7 The consultation mailing zone is shown in Figure 1. Host parish council and district council boundaries in relation to the mailing zone are shown in Appendix B.

5.8 We will publicise the consultation in areas beyond this consultation mailing zone to ensure people living or working in or visiting the local area will be aware of the consultation, using the methods listed in section 7 of this SoCC.

Figure 1: Consultation mailing zone



The consultation mailing zone above is for illustrative purposes only. Exact limits of the zone to be refined in accordance with parish, village, and road boundaries.

6 **Who can take part?**

- 6.1 Anyone who is interested in this scheme is welcome to take part. We welcome all views and will take them into account before we submit our final design.

7 How will we consult?

- 7.1 Our consultation will be focused on digital engagement and consultation tools. This is to ensure the consultation can go ahead and is not affected by any potential future restrictions and government health guidance relating to COVID-19. As such, in addition to making consultation information available online, we will be hosting events online and using a virtual exhibition during the consultation period where members of the project will be available at specific times to discuss the proposals.
- 7.2 Alongside this digital-led approach, we will continue to use non-digital methods where practicable to do so in line with government health guidance relating to COVID-19. However, we reserve the right to cancel face-to-face engagement in the interests of safety.
- 7.3 Details of how we will formally consult with stakeholders, landowners and the local community are included in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Consultation activities

Method	Detail
Raising awareness	
Postcard mailings	<p>In advance of the consultation, we will send a postcard to all residential and business addresses within the mailing zone outlined in Figure 1. The postcard will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a link to the scheme webpage • details of the online and face-to-face consultation events • information on how to pre-register for paper copies of consultation materials (see Table 2 for details of which documents will be available free of charge) <p>A similar email will be sent to users who have registered for updates via the scheme's website and expressed an interest to stay in touch.</p> <p>A second postcard mailing to the same mailing zone and emailing to users who have registered for updates will be issued at the start of the consultation period to advise the consultation is live.</p>
Stakeholder briefings	<p>As part of the consultation, we will offer to brief the following stakeholders about the public consultation and how people can get involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elected representatives including the host MPs, local authority members and parish councils • members of the A358 Community Forum, Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding and Disabled Users Forum and Business Forum • those with an interest in the land that we anticipate we will need to build the scheme or within the draft boundary of the scheme

Hard-to-reach group update	We will contact organisations on our hard-to-reach group list (see Appendix A) by email or phone in advance of the consultation to raise awareness of the consultation activities. We will then email these organisations at the start of the consultation to advise that the consultation is live.
Making information available	
Virtual exhibition	<p>At the start of the consultation period, we will launch an online virtual exhibition room. This tool will allow users to virtually move around a 360-degree replica of an event and interact with materials, including display banners, videos, and technical documents. A link to the online feedback questionnaire will be provided within the virtual exhibition room. The virtual exhibition room will be open 24/7 during the consultation period.</p> <p>We will hold 11 web chats at a range of times and days with members of the project team available at the following times to answer questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 12 October: 4pm–7pm • Wednesday 13 October: 11am–2pm • Friday 15 October: 8am–11am • Friday 15 October: 3pm–6pm • Monday 18 October: midday–3pm • Wednesday 20 October: 10am–1pm • Wednesday 20 October: 6pm–9pm • Friday 22 October: 9am–midday • Friday 22 October: 3pm–6pm • Thursday 18 November: 3pm–6pm • Friday 19 November: 9am–midday <p>Comments made via the online exhibition web chat function will not be considered as formal responses to the consultation. This will be made clear via an online disclaimer.</p>
Dedicated consultation webpage	<p>All consultation documents and the online feedback questionnaire will be made available on our dedicated Citizenspace webpage. The webpage will be made available on the first day of the consultation period. The Citizenspace webpage will be accessible via the scheme webpage: www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields.</p>

<p>Question & Answer webinars</p>	<p>We will hold a series of themed question and answer (Q&A) webinar sessions where specialists from the project team will be available to answer questions. The dates and start times for the one-hour-long sessions are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting on the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme – Thursday 14 October at midday • Section 1 – M5 junction 25 to Mattock’s Tree Green junction – Wednesday 20 October at 5pm • Section 2 – Mattock’s Tree Green junction to Griffin Lane – Thursday 21 October at midday • Section 3 – Griffin Lane to Ashill junction – Thursday 21 October at 5pm • Section 4 – Ashill junction to Southfields roundabout – Friday 22 October at 5pm • Walking, cycling and horse riding – Monday 1 November at 3pm • The environment – Tuesday 2 November at 3pm • Traffic modelling – Thursday 4 November at 3pm • Consulting on the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme – Thursday 18 November at 6pm <p>People will be able to participate in the sessions online as well as via a dedicated phone number.</p> <p>The sessions will be advertised on the project website, and the details included in consultation publicity materials and promoted via press and social media.</p> <p>Comments made via the Q&A webinars will not be considered as formal responses to the consultation. This will be made clear as part of the presentation at each webinar and people will be directed towards the feedback channels listed in section 8 of this SoCC.</p>
<p>Consultation events (face to face)</p>	<p>We will hold face-to-face consultation events to supplement the virtual exhibition room. These will take place in line with government guidelines in place at the time. Public health will remain the priority and we reserve the right to cancel the events owing to COVID-19 restrictions if required.</p> <p>We will hold events at the following venues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taunton Racecourse, Orchard Portman, Taunton TA3 7BL – Tuesday 19 October from 2pm to 8pm • Monks Yard (Conference Room), Horton Cross Farm, Horton Cross, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 9PT – Saturday 23 October from 11am to 6pm • Holiday Inn Taunton, Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2UA – Wednesday 3 November from 11am to 6pm

	Printed copies of the consultation materials will be made available at consultation events for attendees to review. Attendees will also be able to take away copies of the consultation booklet and feedback questionnaire and submit hard copy feedback questionnaires at the events.
Video/telephone call	Members of the public will be able to request a call back from a member of the project team (subject to availability) by calling our customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000 (lines are open 24 hours a day) or by emailing A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk .
Publicity	
Method	Detail
Press releases	<p>Press releases publicising the upcoming consultation and how the community and road users can get involved will be issued to the following key outlets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset County Gazette • Somerset Live • BBC Radio Somerset • ITV News West Country • BBC Points West and Spotlight • Chard and Ilminster News • The Western Gazette
Email and letters	<p>At the start of the consultation period, we will send either emails or letters about the consultation and how to get involved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constituency and neighbouring constituency area MPs • elected representatives at Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council and Somerset West and Taunton Council • host parish councils • local authorities and parish councils adjacent to host local authorities and parish councils
Statutory notices	<p>Statutory notices to publicise the proposed DCO application and the SoCC will be published as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed DCO application – once in a national newspaper and the London Gazette and twice in locally circulating newspapers • Publicising the SoCC – once in local circulating newspaper(s) <p>Statutory notices will also be placed in at least 10 publicly accessible locations along the proposed route of the scheme.</p>
Social media	We will promote the consultation on National Highways' South West Twitter and Facebook accounts, @HighwaysSWEST. Consultation feedback will not be accepted through social media channels.

- 7.4 Any activity(ies) that cannot be undertaken due to circumstances beyond our control, where possible, will be substituted with similar activity(ies) and advertised in local newspapers (via press release) circulating in the vicinity of the scheme. Any activity changes will also be published on National Highways' South West Twitter and Facebook accounts, @HighwaysSWEST.

8 How to respond to the consultation

- 8.1 A feedback questionnaire will be produced to help you provide comments on the scheme design. The questionnaire can be completed online via the scheme's webpage: www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields.
- 8.2 Hard copy feedback forms can be collected at one of the designated information points or requested by:
- calling us on 0300 123 5000
 - emailing us at A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk
- 8.3 The questionnaire can be returned free of charge using the freepost response address: FREEPOST A358 TAUNTON TO SOUTHFIELDS (the address must be written in capital letters and you do not need a stamp).
- 8.4 Alternatively, feedback can be provided by email:
A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk
- 8.5 All responses must be received by **Monday 22 November at 23:59**. Responses received after that date may not be considered.

9 Information available at and details of local display/deposit locations

9.1 We will make the following documents available as part of the consultation:

Table 2: Consultation documents

Document	Detail
Consultation booklet	<p>Written in plain English, this document will provide a summary of the proposals including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the background to the scheme • a description of the proposed development • information about design changes since the last consultation • information about the potential benefits, effects and impacts of the proposed scheme, with a particular focus on the design changes • how we propose to mitigate any potential impacts • signposts for readers to more detailed information reports and how to provide feedback on the proposed scheme. <p>This document will be available online, and in hard copy at the designated public information points or on request.</p>
Feedback questionnaire	<p>The feedback questionnaire will be available for consultees to provide their feedback on specific aspects of the development. It will be available online, and in hard copy at the designated public information points or on request.</p>
Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report	<p>This will provide stakeholders, landowners and statutory environmental bodies with an update on the Environmental Impact Assessment process and preparation of the Environmental Statement, so an informed response can be given as part of the consultation. It will contain preliminary information on the likely environmental effects of our proposals, and covers the environmental assessment areas as listed in section 3.4 of this SoCC.</p> <p>It will also set out how we propose to reduce these effects and how we propose to maximise the benefits of the scheme. A NTS of the PEI Report will also be made available. The PEI Report and NTS will be available online, at public information points, and at face-to-face events.</p>
Map of the route	<p>This will highlight where the proposed route is located.</p>
A set of plans of the scheme	<p>These will provide details of the designs for the scheme, including a plan showing the proposed route of the application. The list of plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • walking, cycling and horse riding plans • general arrangement plans • profile and road plans

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEI Report NTS • technical traffic note
A notice of application	We will publish a notice of the consultation and provide it to statutory consultees as required.
Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)	This SoCC document will be made available as part of the consultation.

9.2 We will make these consultation documents available to view in the following ways:

Table 3: Methods to make consultation documents available

Method	Detail
Scheme website	All consultation documents will be available via the scheme's website which can be found at: www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields .
Public information points	<p>Subject to COVID-19 restrictions, consultation booklets and feedback questionnaires will be available to pick up at public information points. These locations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton TA1 3XZ • South Petherton Library, 3 St James's Street, South Petherton TA13 5BS • Martock Library, North Street, Martock TA12 6DL • Priorswood Library, Hillside Children's Centre, Eastwick Rd, Taunton TA2 7HD • Ilminster Library, Ditton Street, Ilminster TA19 0BW (hard copy of the PEI Report will also be available for inspection at this location) • Chard Library, Holyrood Street, Chard TA20 2YA • Somerset County Council mobile library • Ilminster Meeting House & Arts Centre, 35 East Street, Ilminster TA19 0AN • Henlade Post Office, Henlade, Taunton TA3 5DH • Blackbrook Leisure Centre & Spa, Blackbrook Way, Taunton TA1 2RW • Somerset West and Taunton Council, Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 1HE (hard copy of the PEI Report will also be available for inspection at this location) <p>Consultation booklets and feedback questionnaires will also be sent to host parish councils (where agreed).</p> <p>We will check, by telephone and/or in person, on a weekly</p>

	basis that consultation documentation remains at the public information points throughout the consultation period.
Requests for documents	As outlined in Table 1, prior to the launch of consultation people will be able to pre-register to receive hard copies of documents on the launch of consultation. Paper copies of the consultation booklet, feedback questionnaire, PEI Report NTS and SoCC will be supplied free of charge, however, there may be a charge of up to £200 for paper copies of other consultation materials.

10 Next steps

- 10.2 We will record and carefully consider all responses received during the consultation. Responses will be taken into account in finalising our application before we submit it to the Planning Inspectorate.
- 10.3 We will summarise our findings in a Consultation Report which will include a description of how our application was informed by the responses received, and outline any changes made as a result of consultation. The Consultation Report forms part of our submission to the Planning Inspectorate.
- 10.4 The Planning Inspectorate will decide whether the application meets the required standards to proceed to examination and will determine whether our consultation has been adequate.
- 10.5 For more information visit our scheme webpage: www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields, where you can also sign up for email alerts whenever the webpage is updated. If you have any queries about this scheme, please contact the project team directly by calling 0300 123 5000 or emailing A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk.

Your data, your rights

- 10.6 On 25 May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) became law. The law requires National Highways to explain to you – consultees, stakeholders, and customers – how your personal data will be used and stored. National Highways adheres to the government’s consultation principles and the Planning Act 2008 as required, and may collect personal data to help shape development of highways schemes. Personal data collected by the project team will be processed and retained by National Highways and its appointed contractors until the scheme is complete. Under the GDPR regulations you have the following rights:
- Right of access to the data (Subject Access Request)
 - Right for the rectification of errors
 - Right to erasure of personal data – this is not an absolute right under the legislation
 - Right to restrict processing or to object to processing
 - Right to data portability
- 10.7 If, at any point, National Highways plans to process the personal data we hold for a purpose other than that for which it was originally collected, we will tell you what that other purpose is. We will do this prior to any further processing taking place and we will include any relevant additional information, including your right to object to that further processing.
- 10.8 You have the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority, the Information Commissioners Office.
- 10.9 If you would like more information about how we manage data, or a copy of our privacy notice, please contact: DataProtectionAdvice@highwaysengland.co.uk.

Appendix A: Hard-to-reach organisations

Economically challenged and socially deprived communities

ARC

Charis Refugees

Community Council for Somerset

Samaritans of Taunton and Somerset

Somerset Association of Trade Councils

Spark Somerset

Taunton Open Door

The Gooch Charitable Trust

Unite the Union - Taunton Office

Youth groups

Girl Guiding Somerset County

HQ Somerset Army Cadets

Scouting Somerset County

Somerset UK Youth Parliament

Young Farmers Association (Somerset)

Young Somerset (was Somerset Rural Youth Project)

YMCA Taunton

Elderly groups

Age UK – Somerset

Kinship Care Support Group Taunton

Somerset Social Group

Taunton U3A

Time constrained, working parents

Kinship Support Group Somerset

LGBTQ+ Groups

2BU Somerset

Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gay Men (FFLAG)

GMG Southwest

Somerset Lesbian Network

Taunton Gay Group

People with disabilities

Compass Disability Services

Discovery UK

ESCAPE Support Group

Learning disability forum in Somerset

Somerset Carers Service

Somerset Disability Engagement Services

Somerset Dyslexia Association

Somerset SENDIAS

Somerset Sight

Taunton & Bridgwater Deaf Group

Taunton & District Mencap Society

Taunton Autism Support Group

Taunton Opportunity Group
UK Pensioners Forum

BAME Groups

Diversity Voice
Somerset Diverse Communities (Part of Community Council for Somerset)

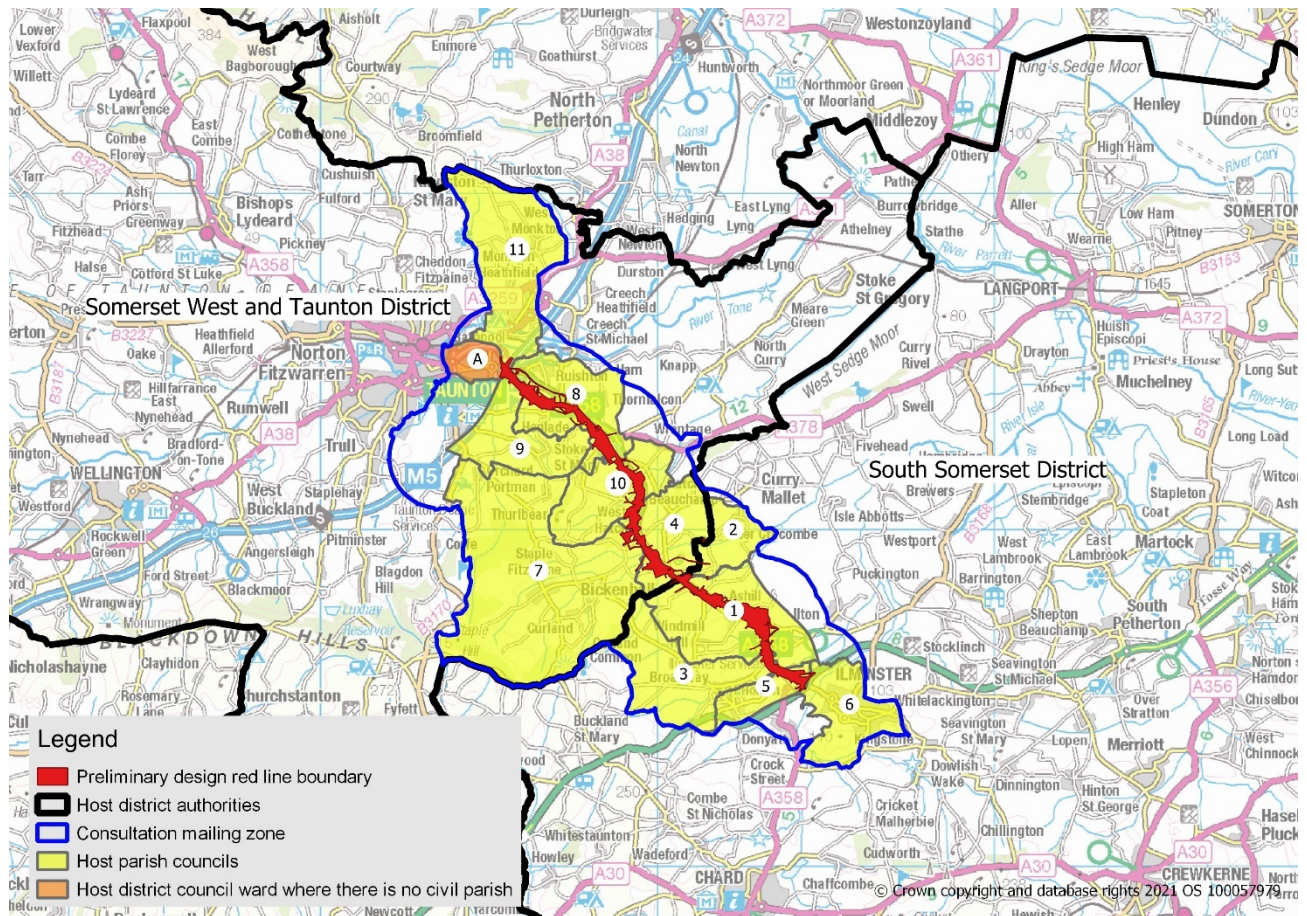
Holiday homeowners, tourists, visitors and travellers groups

Taunton Visitor Centre (Visit Somerset Branch)
Visit Somerset

Gypsy/Traveller Groups

Friends, Families and Travellers

Appendix B: Host parish council and district council boundaries in relation to consultation mailing zone



Host Parish Councils

- 1) Ashill Parish Council
- 2) Beercrocombe Parish Council
- 3) Broadway Parish Council
- 4) Hatch Beachamp Parish Council
- 5) Horton Parish Council
- 6) Ilminster Town Council
- 7) Neroche Parish Council (note: Bickenhall is the host civil parish but as it is part of a grouped council, Neroche Parish Council, the entire boundaries of this council has been included)
- 8) Ruishton, Thornflacon & Henlade Parish Council
- 9) Stoke St Mary Parish Council
- 10) West Hatch Parish Council
- 11) West Monkton Parish Council

Host District Council ward where there is no civil parish

- A) Halcon & Lane ward