



A358

Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme

**Report on Public Consultation
(28 March – 16 July 2017)**

January 2018

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Executive Summary

Context

The A358 Taunton to Southfields dualling scheme is one of a programme of schemes planned along the A303/A358 route corridor, as set out in the Government's *Road Investment Strategy* (RIS). The A358 together with the A303 forms a direct strategic link to the south west from London and the south east. More than a third of the A358 is single carriageway which causes significant congestion. Recognising this, the Government's strategy is to upgrade the entire A303/A358 route to a high quality dual carriageway link between the M3, near Basingstoke, and the M5 at Taunton.

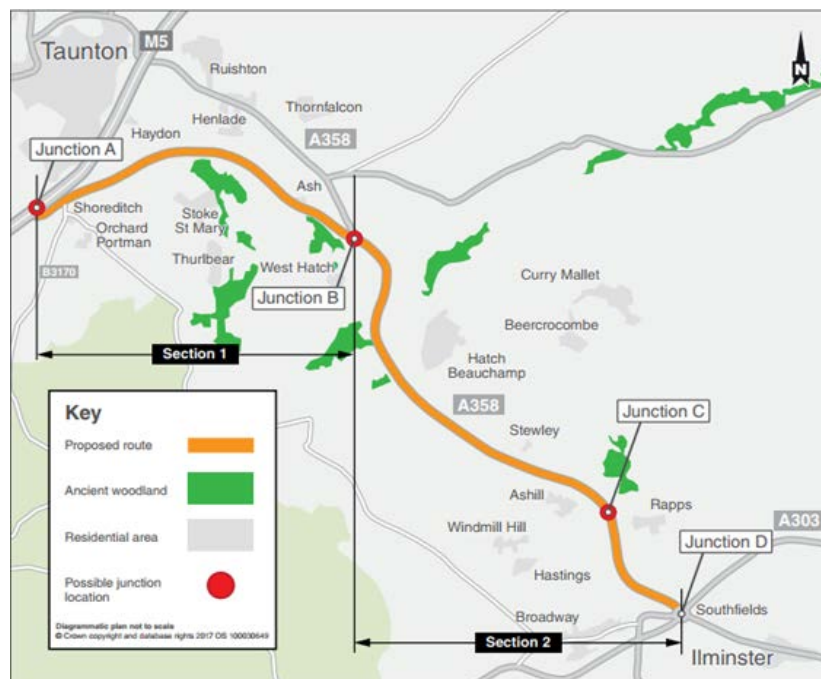
The scheme

As part of the scheme's development, Highways England held a public consultation from 28 March to 16 July 2017 to:

- Raise awareness of the scheme proposals
- Gain relevant feedback to inform decision-making on the preferred route and help its future development

The proposal presented at public consultation for the A358 Taunton to Southfields dualling scheme is shown below in **Figure E-1**.

Figure E-1: A358 improvement proposals between Taunton and Southfields



As shown in **Figure E-1**, the proposed improvement was divided into 2 sections to help analyse feedback received from the consultation. The sections were as follows:

- **Section 1** – a new motorway junction and dual carriageway from the M5 to West Hatch
- **Section 2** – upgrading the remainder of the A358 along the line of the existing road to Southfields Roundabout on the A303

The public consultation

Several scheme exhibition events were held during the consultation period, including an invitation only stakeholder preview event on 28 March 2017 at the Museum of Somerset. We also held 5 public information events, which were held at varying times throughout the period of 7 April to 30 June 2017 and was attended by 1,670 people collectively. Events were held in locations across the proposed route to ensure local people did not have to travel far to attend. All stakeholders, landholders and members of the public were made aware of the public consultation arrangements through mailed letters and by information published on the scheme's consultation website (<https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a358-taunton-to-southfields/>). Press releases were also issued from Highways England to local media outlets which outlined important consultation information.

The following consultation material was made available:

- Public consultation scheme brochure
- Scheme maps
- Technical Appraisal Report (TAR) (3 April 2017)

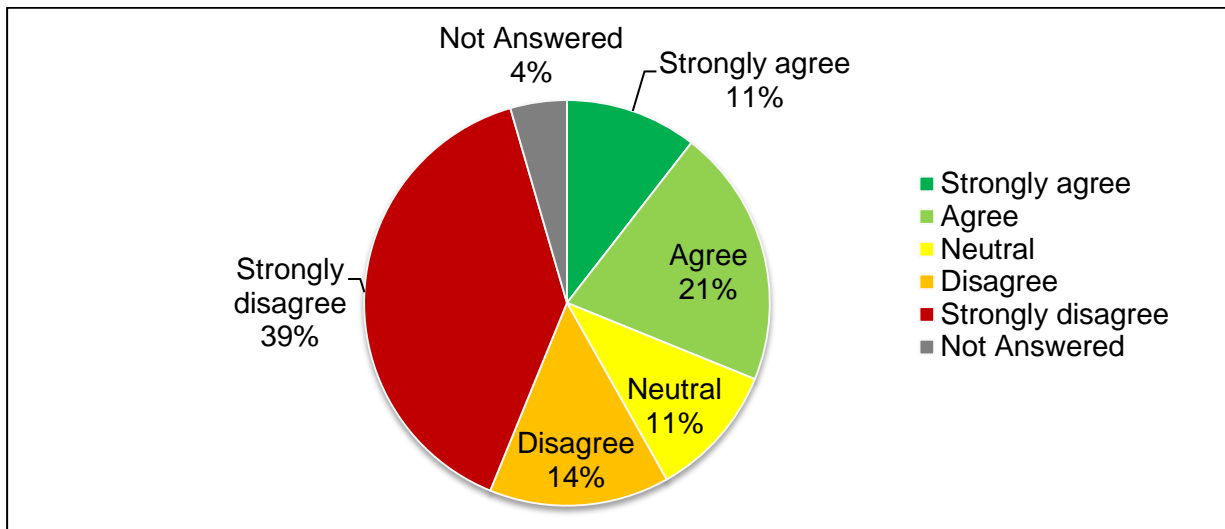
Feedback was invited through a consultation questionnaire.

Consultation Feedback

The public events were attended by 1,670 people and a total of 1,198 questionnaires were returned.

When asked in the consultation questionnaire, 'to what degree do you believe the scheme proposal has achieved the objectives?' 53% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the proposals would meet the scheme objectives. See **Figure E-2**.

Figure E-2: To what degree do you believe the scheme proposal has achieved the objectives?



The results outlined above can largely be attributed to Section 1 of the scheme. Many respondents wanted to see more options for connecting the upgraded A358 with the M5 and more solutions to alleviate the level of traffic through Henlade. There was less concern about the principle of upgrading the A358 along the route of the existing road for Section 2 of the scheme. These and other concerns are outlined throughout this report.

Following the feedback received from this consultation, Highways England has decided to hold a further consultation on the scheme proposals in early 2018, including more options for connecting the upgraded A358 with the M5. We will then make a decision on the preferred route.

Highways England will await the feedback from the further consultation before responding directly to people's comments from this consultation. Our feedback responses from both consultations will then be included in their respective consultation reports, before a Preferred Route Announcement is made.

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. This consultation report provides an account of the non-statutory public consultation undertaken from 28 March to 16 July 2017 for the Highways England A358 Taunton to Southfields dualling scheme. It provides a full account of:

- How the strategy for the non-statutory public consultation was developed to be consistent with requirements for the next stage of statutory consultation. This will precede the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO)
- How the public consultation was undertaken
- The feedback received

1.1.2. Following consideration of the feedback received from the consultation, Highways England has decided to hold a further consultation on the scheme proposals for the A358 Taunton to Southfields dualling scheme. The new consultation would present options for connecting the upgraded A358 with the M5, allowing further information to be gathered before making a decision on the preferred route. People are thereby being provided with the opportunity to comment on the scheme again. If people wish to stand by their previous feedback without change or addition, that will also be considered as part of informing the choice of a preferred route. In the circumstances, Highways England will await the feedback from the further consultation before responding directly to comments.

1.2. Structure of the report

1.2.1. Highways England gave careful consideration to the relevant guidance and advice notes from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) when planning the public engagement. This report describes compliant activities undertaken during the process detailing:

- The approach to consultation, including how Highways England informed and consulted the local community, landholders, statutory and non-statutory stakeholders
- The feedback received, together with a summary of the main considerations raised

1.2.2. This report has the following structure:

-
- Chapter 1 – Introduction
 - Chapter 2 – Approach to consultation
 - Chapter 3 – Scheme proposals consulted on
 - Chapter 4 – How the consultation was undertaken
 - Chapter 5 – Overview of the consultation feedback
 - Chapter 6 – Conclusion and next steps

1.3. Scheme background and context

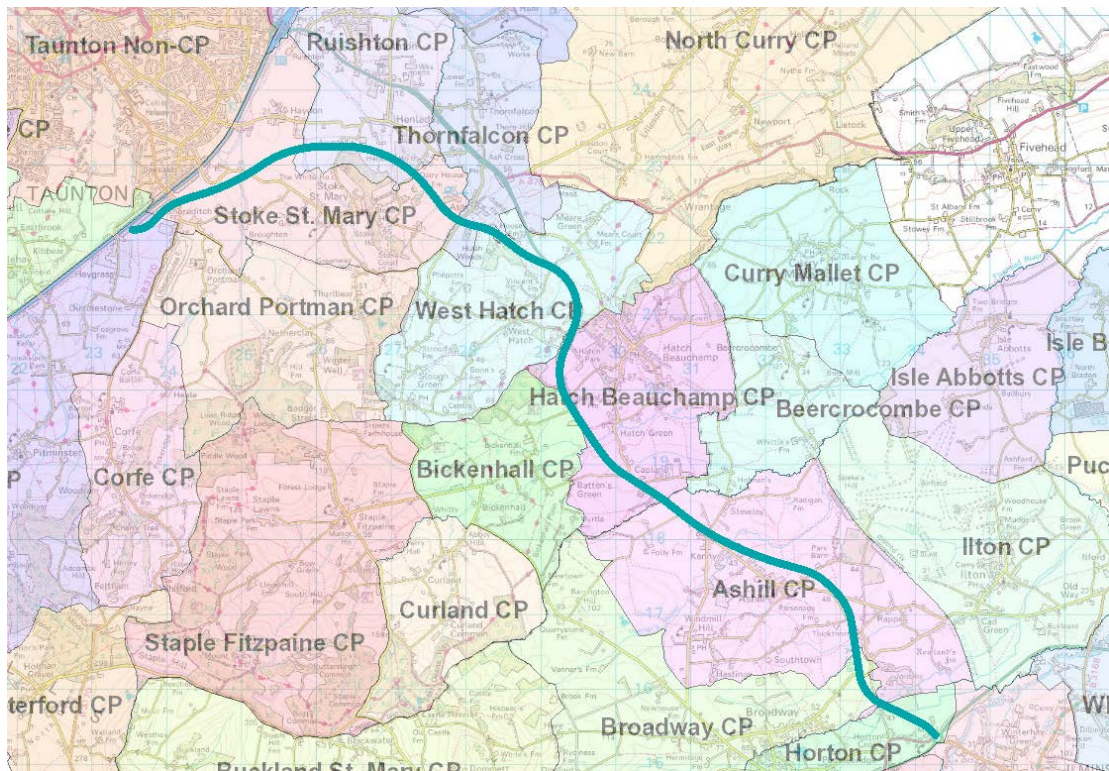
- 1.3.1. Proposals for improving the A358 between the M5 at Taunton and the Southfields Roundabout were first considered in 2007, but were subsequently put on hold. The current improvement scheme was announced in the Government's *Road Investment Strategy (RIS): for the 2015/16 – 2019/20 Road Period* (www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-investment-strategy).
- 1.3.2. The A303/A358 corridor forms a strategic link between the south west and the rest of the south, south east and London. More than a third of the corridor is single carriageway which causes significant congestion, particularly during weekends and the summer months.
- 1.3.3. As set out in the RIS, the Government's strategy is to improve connectivity to the south west by upgrading the entire A303/A358 route to a high quality dual carriageway from the M3, near Basingstoke, to the M5 at Taunton. This is aimed at enhancing the economy of the south west which underperforms compared with other regions across the country. The scheme is one of a planned programme of 8 improvements proposed by Highways England along the A303/A358 corridor. You can find out more about the wider plans to improve the A303/A358 corridor by reading Highways England's booklet, *Creating an Expressway to the South West: The Case for the A303/A358 Corridor*, which is available to read or download from our consultation website.
- 1.3.4. The scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. As a result, Highways England is required to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate to gain permission to construct the scheme.

1.4. The scheme – A358 Taunton to Southfields

- 1.4.1. The existing A358 between Taunton and Southfields Roundabout is located in the Taunton Deane Borough Council, South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council local authority areas in the County of

Somerset. The road runs from north to west and south to east between the towns of Taunton and Ilminster. At Taunton, the A358 connects to the M5 motorway at Junction 25 and, at Ilminster, connects to the A303 at Southfields Roundabout. The road passes through the parishes of Ruishton, Thornfalcon, West Hatch, Hatch Beauchamp, Bickenhall, Ashill and Horton. From Junction 25 of the M5, the road passes through the village of Henlade before then passing through largely rural farmland before meeting the A303 at Southfields Roundabout. This is shown on **Figure 1.1**.

Figure 1.1: Parishes in the vicinity of the proposed scheme



1.4.2. The A358 is a main route from the A303 to Taunton, the M5 and beyond. It is used by commuters, businesses, freight operators, tourists and by the communities along the route. Between Taunton and Southfields, the road comprises a mixture of dual and single carriageway, with a number of existing junctions and private accesses. On weekdays, up to 24,000 vehicles use the single carriageway section, which is designed to carry 13,000 vehicles. The flows are even higher during holiday periods and at weekends. The result is congestion, queues and poor journey time reliability and traffic is forecast to rise further as local authorities seek to deliver economic growth and new development. Other issues causing safety concerns include:

- Poor junction visibility
- Slow moving agricultural vehicles

-
- Limited opportunities for safe overtaking

1.4.3. To address these issues and support the strategy for delivering a high quality dual carriageway to the south west, the scheme has the following objectives:

Within that context, we have set ourselves a number of objectives for the scheme, which are:

- **Capacity** – reduce delays and queues that occur during peak hours and at seasonal times of the year
- **Safety** – improve safety along the route corridor and along the A358 Taunton to Southfields route for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users
- **Environment** – avoid unacceptable impacts on the surrounding natural and historic environment and landscape and explore opportunities for enhancement
- **Local communities** – reduce community severance and promote opportunities for improving their quality of life
- **Connectivity** – improve the connectivity of the south west to the rest of the UK and improve business and growth prospects
- **Resilience** – improve journey time reliability and resilience, and provide extra capacity to make it easier to manage traffic when incidents occur
- **Support economic growth** – facilitate growth in jobs and housing by providing a free-flowing and reliable connection between the south east and the south west

1.4.4. Following an appraisal and sifting process set out in the TAR (3 April 2017), Highways England put forward for consultation the scheme proposals described in Chapter 3.

2. Approach to Consultation

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. Highways England recognises the importance of consulting early in the development of a scheme. For this reason, it chose to consult at a stage earlier than the statutory requirements, using best practice as a guide.

2.2. Consultation planning

2.2.1. A non-statutory proxy Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) was developed to provide explanation of how Highways England would consult about the route options proposals. To help develop the proxy SoCC, Highways England engaged with the host local authorities' communications and community officers. **Table 2.1** shows the working group meetings that took place. **Table 2.2** shows a summary of the SoCC, and a full copy can be found in Appendix B.

Table 2.1: SoCC Working Group Meetings

Date	Stakeholders	Topics raised	Influence
14 January 2016	Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council	Scheme overview and building collaborative relationships	Awareness of channels of communication
22 March 2016	Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council	Explanation of the non-statutory and statutory consultation process, development consent order process and development of the SoCC	Clarifying plans to engage with local parish councils and ward members
26 May 2016	Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council	Discussion of draft SoCC, public consultation dates, update on consultation process, progress on the project and equality strategy	Discussions about planned roll-out of public consultation programme and methodologies proposed

Table 2.2: Summary of SoCC approach

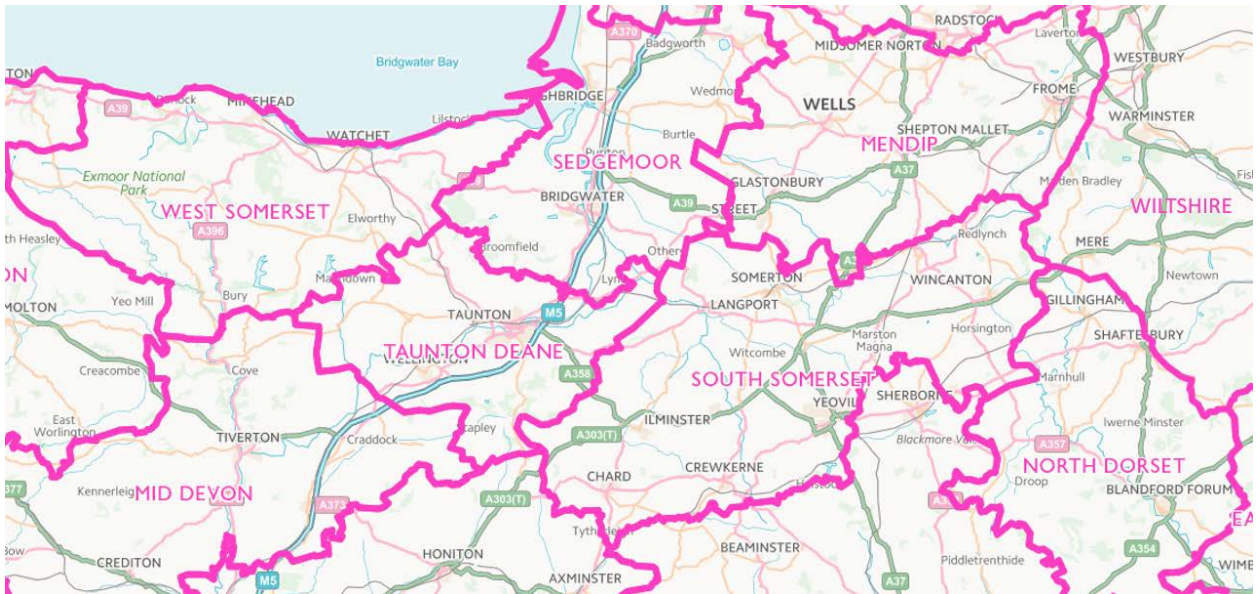
Method	Detail
Public information events	Public information events will be held at locations along the route of the scheme to offer people an opportunity to view the proposed route options, speak with the project team and provide feedback.

Method	Detail
	<p>The local community, businesses and road users will be informed of the events through channels including written communications, the Highways England website and local media. Information on how to provide consultation feedback will be available at the events and the Highways England website.</p> <p>A printed questionnaire will be available for members of the public to provide feedback and these can be left with the project team, posted free of charge to a freepost address or emailed to us.</p> <p>Information will be available to members of the public detailing how to provide feedback online at the Highways England website.</p>
Public information points	<p>Information advertising the public information events will be on view at specified public information points.</p> <p>Consultation brochures will be available at public information points for the local community and other road users.</p> <p>Information about how the local community, businesses and other road users can provide consultation feedback will be available at the public information points.</p> <p>A printed questionnaire will be available for the local community and other road users to provide feedback at the public information points and these can be posted free of charge or emailed to us.</p> <p>Information detailing how to provide feedback online at the Highways England website will be available.</p>
Project website	<p>Details of the scheme background, the need for the scheme and the proposed route options will be provided on the scheme web page (www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields)</p> <p>Supporting route option documents including the consultation brochure will be available to download or print.</p> <p>A questionnaire will be available for members of the local community and other road users to provide feedback online.</p>
Written communication	<p>We will send residents and businesses inside the 1,500 metre consultation zone an information letter that explains the proposed route options and the issues being consulted on. The letters will invite people to the public information events and detail how consultation feedback can be provided to us.</p> <p>Other key stakeholder organisations and identified special interest groups will also receive information letters that explain the route options stage proposals and the issues being consulted on. The letters will invite recipients to the public information events and detail how consultation feedback can be provided to us.</p> <p>Individuals or organisations that have registered to receive further communications on the Highways England scheme web page will be sent information emails that explain the proposed route options and the issues being consulted on. The emails will invite recipients to the public information events and detail how consultation feedback can be provided to us.</p>
Consultation	We will produce a consultation brochure providing information about the route

Method	Detail
brochure	<p>options stage proposals, the need for the scheme and the issues being consulted on. The brochure will be available to view on the Highways England scheme web page.</p> <p>The consultation brochure will also be available at public information events and public information points.</p> <p>Copies of the consultation brochure can be provided free of charge by request to Highways England.</p>
Representatives at local groups and forums	We welcome contact from local groups and forums. Where it is considered that there is a relevant interest and where a visit is considered proportionate and appropriate, we will attend a local event to discuss the consultation.
Hard-to-reach groups	<p>Appropriate and proportionate consultation tools for hard-to-reach groups, which we have identified by working with local authorities, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations to community groups and organisations • Appropriate direct engagement with, for example, younger people and disabled people and representative groups • Provision of appropriate and accessible materials in local community/hard-to-reach centres • Provision of appropriate and accessible materials (i.e. in large print and alternative languages if requested) • Venues chosen for public events to be compliant with the Equality Act 2010
Consultation stage updates	The local community and other road users will be updated about progress of the current stage of consultation through channels including written communications, the Highways England website, local media and local authority websites, newsletters and social media.
Consultation feedback	<p>Written feedback can be made either online or in writing to Highways England at the following addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk • A358 Taunton to Southfields, 2/07K Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6HA

2.2.2. The adjoining authorities to Taunton Deane Borough Council, Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council, shown on **Figure 2.1**, were also engaged during the development of the non-statutory SoCC. These included Devon County Council, Dorset County Council, Wiltshire Council, West Somerset District Council, Mid Devon District Council, East Devon District Council, Mendip District Council, North Devon District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, North Somerset Council, Bath & North East Somerset Council, West Dorset District Council, North Dorset District Council. Advice was provided on the most appropriate means of consultation in their experience of the local area.

Figure 2.1: Map of adjacent local authorities

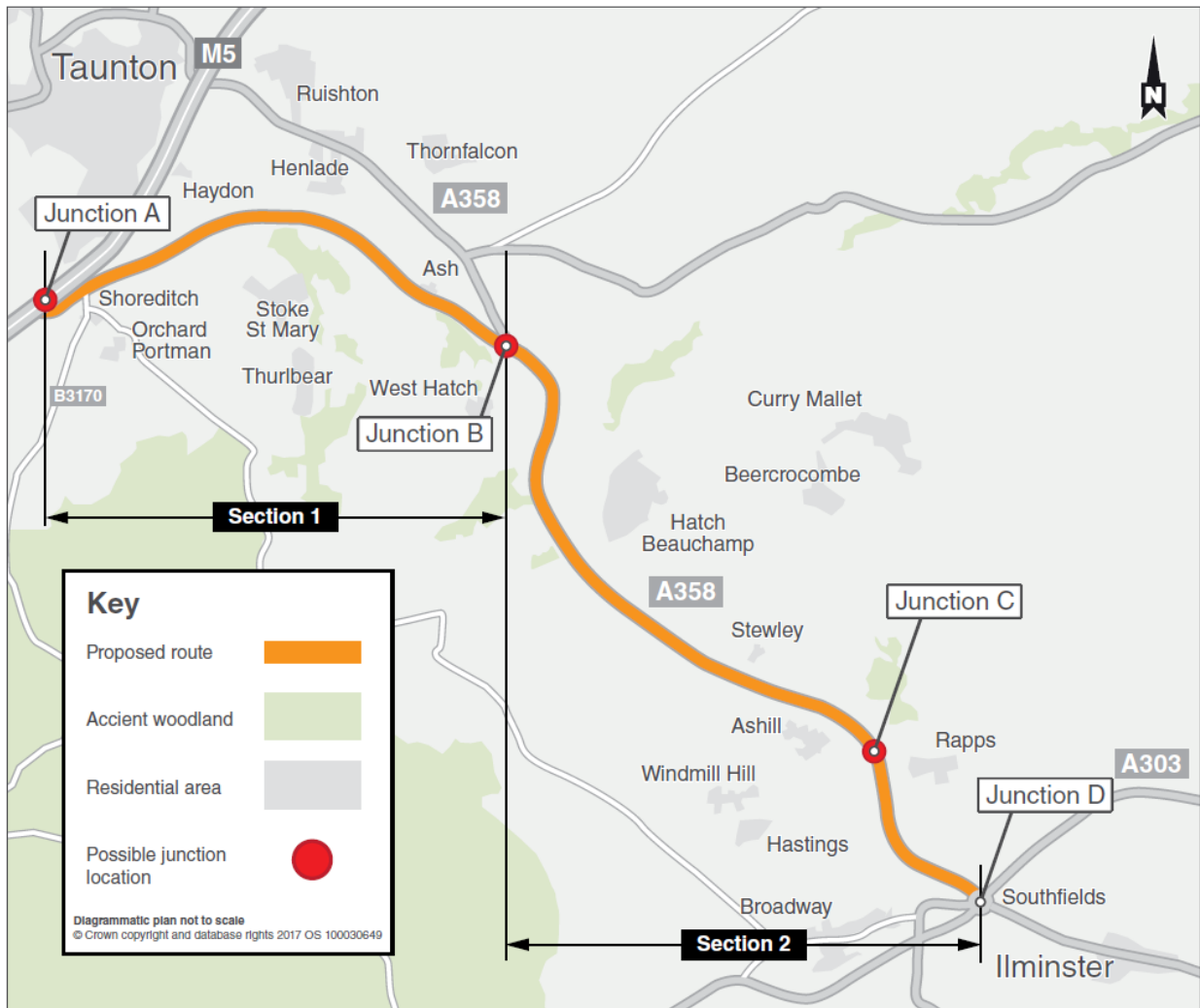


3. Scheme proposals consulted on

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. The scheme proposals consulted on are shown on **Figure 3.1**.

Figure 3.1: A358 improvement proposals between Taunton and Southfields



3.1.2. As shown in **Figure 3.1**, the proposed improvement was divided into 2 sections. The sections were as follows:

- **Section 1** – a new motorway junction and dual carriageway from the M5 to West Hatch
- **Section 2** – upgrading the remainder of the A358 along the line of the existing road to Southfields Roundabout on the A303

3.2. Section 1

3.2.1. Section 1 included:

- A new motorway junction located south of Taunton (Junction A), located between the existing Junctions 25 and 26.
- A new section of dual carriageway from the M5 to West Hatch.
- Provision of a new split-level junction at West Hatch Lane.
- Creation of Junction B to connect to the A378 and other local areas including Thornfalcon, Ruishton and Henlade.
- Provision of new bridges or underpasses at locations to be determined to ensure retention of good connectivity across the dual carriageway for motorists, cyclists, equestrians, and pedestrians.

3.3. Section 2

3.3.1. Section 2 included:

- Widening of the existing A358 to dual carriageway standard between West Hatch Lane and Southfields Roundabout.
- Possible new junction near Ashill (Junction C) to accommodate access to local communities.
- Modifications to Southfields Roundabout to accommodate a new dual carriageway connection (Junction D).
- Provision of new bridges or underpasses at locations to be determined to ensure retention of good connectivity across the dual carriageway for motorists, cyclists, equestrians and pedestrians.

4. How consultation was undertaken

4.1. Introduction

- 4.1.1. The non-statutory public consultation took place between 28 March and 16 July 2017. A website hosted details of the proposed route option including supporting documentation such as the scheme brochure, consultation questionnaire and TAR (3 April 2017) (see <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a358-taunton-to-southfields>). The scheme proposals outlined in Chapter 3 were presented at 5 public exhibitions in April and June 2017 where the public could discuss the proposals with members of the project team with specialisms including traffic modelling and environmental impacts.

4.2. Consultation Programme

- 4.2.1. The public consultation period commenced on 28 March 2017 and ended on 16 July 2017.
- 4.2.2. A General Election was called during the consultation period and, in keeping with pre-election guidance, the consultation was suspended during the period of election purdah. The end of the consultation period was extended from 20 May to 16 July 2017 as a result.
- 4.2.3. The consultation event programme began on 28 March 2017 with an invitation event for elected members, affording them the opportunity to view and discuss the proposed scheme with the project team ahead of the public events in the local area. Local parish councillors were invited so that they could be informed about the proposed scheme to be able to discuss subsequently with constituents.
- 4.2.4. **Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3** below detail the consultation events held.

Table 4.1: Invitation preview event

Date	Venue	Time
Tuesday 28 March 2017	Museum of Somerset (Great Hall), Taunton Castle, Castle Green, Taunton, TA1 4AA	6.30pm to 8.30pm, event welcome at 7.00pm

Table 4.2: Landholder events

Date	Venue	Time
Thursday 30 March 2017	Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Village Road, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton, TA3 6SG	11.00am to 8.00pm
Friday 31 March 2017	The Wyvern Club, Mountfields	11.00am to 8.00pm

	Road, Taunton, TA1 3BJ	
Monday 3 April 2017	Monks Yard (Conference Room), Horton Cross Farm, Horton Cross, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9PT	11.00am to 8.00pm
Tuesday 4 April 2017	Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Priory Suite 3 and 4), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA	11.00am to 8.00pm

Table 4.3: Public Events

Date	Venue	Time
Friday 7 April 2017	Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Village Road, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton, TA3 6SG	10.00am to 6.00pm
Saturday 8 April 2017	Taunton Racecourse (Owners and Trainers Paddock Stand), Orchard Portman, Taunton, TA3 7BL	10.00am to 6.00pm
Monday 10 April 2017	Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Blackdown Suite), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA	12.00 noon to 8.00pm
Tuesday 11 April 2017	Monks Yard (Conference Room), Horton Cross Farm, Horton Cross, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9PT	12.00 noon to 8.00pm
Friday 30 June 2017 (replacing an event planned for 8 May, but postponed due to the election purdah)	Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Blackdown Suite), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA	10.00am to 7.00pm

4.2.5. An overview of public consultation events is set out below:

- **Invitation preview event** – An evening event was held for local elected representatives
- **Landholder events** – Events were held for landholders and tenants with land interests within 150 metres of the scheme. These events were by appointment only, to allow landholders to discuss concerns with specialists from the project team
- **Public events** – The public events provided valuable insight into views held by the local community and how they use the existing road network. There were 5 public events, with 1,670 people attending overall. Additional events took place within parished areas along the route, which were open to the public

4.2.6. A scheme consultation website was launched, where consultation materials could be viewed and information about how to respond to the consultation was available. The website's address is:

<https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a358-taunton-to-southfields/>

4.2.7. The consultation materials available on the scheme website included:

- Consultation brochure (Appendix D)
- Consultation questionnaire (Appendix C)

- Technical Appraisal Report
 - Environmental constraints plan (Appendix E)
- 4.2.8. In addition to the public events listed in **Table 4.3**, a number of additional events were held with stakeholders as listed in **Table 4.4**. At each event, a presentation on the scheme proposals was given by Highways England. This was followed by a question and answer session which provided attendees with the opportunity to ask about the scheme proposals and the way forward.

Table 4.4: Additional stakeholder presentations

Date	Attendees
Wednesday 14 June 2017	Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council
Monday 19 June 2017	Stoke St Mary Parish Council
Wednesday 21 June 2017	Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
Wednesday 21 June 2017	Ruishton Parish Council
Tuesday 27 June 2017	Killams and Mountfields Ward
Monday 3 July 2017	Ashill Parish Council
Tuesday 4 July 2017	University of the Third Age
Tuesday 4 July 2017	Broadway Parish Council
Thursday 6 July 2017	West Hatch Parish Council

4.3. Publicising the consultation

- 4.3.1. The public consultation was promoted in accordance with the proxy SoCC in the following ways:
- Letters were sent to 109 organisations outlining the scheme proposals and drawing attention to the scheme website and public consultation events, including an invitation to attend the preview event for elected representatives (Appendix F). The organisations included representatives of hard-to-reach groups. A list of key stakeholder organisations that also received this letter can be found at Appendix I.
 - Letters were sent to 356 potentially affected landholders outlining the scheme proposals and drawing attention to the scheme website, public information points (see **Table 4.5**), public consultation events and including an invitation to book an individual appointment at a landholder event. A copy of this letter can be found in Appendix H
 - Letters were sent to 7,289 addresses located within 1500 metres of the route option outlining the scheme proposals and drawing attention to the scheme website, public information points and public consultation events. A copy of this letter can be found in Appendix G

- The Department for Transport issued a press release on 28 March 2017 (Appendix A) to local media, explaining scheme proposal and promoting details of the public consultation
- All details of the route option proposals and consultation material, including the means to contact Highways England and to complete an online questionnaire (Appendix C), were published on the scheme's consultation website. A copy of the public consultation brochure can be found at Appendix D.
- A poster was displayed at all public information points, advertising the times and venues of the public events. This can be found on the scheme's consultation website

4.4. Public information points

- 4.4.1. Consultation materials were made available at public information points in the vicinity of the scheme proposal. This allowed interested parties to collect the consultation brochure and questionnaire if they were unable to attend one of the scheduled public events. The non-statutory SoCC working group was consulted on the selection of these venues to ensure their suitability for public access. The venue locations are detailed in **Table 4.5**.

Table 4.5: Public information points

Public information points	
Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE	Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3XZ
Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY	South Somerset District Council, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2HT
Petheron Library, St. James Street, South Petheron, Somerset, TA13 5BS	Martock Library, Martock Shopping Centre, Martock, Somerset, TA12 6DL
Iminster Meeting House & Arts Centre, East Street, Iminster, TA19 0AN	Henlade Post Office, Henlade, Taunton, TA3 5DH

- 4.4.2. At the public information points the following consultation material was available:
- The consultation brochure
 - The consultation questionnaire and freepost envelope
 - A copy of the Technical Appraisal Report
 - The poster detailing public consultation/exhibition events and scheme website

4.5. Receiving feedback

- 4.5.1. The public consultation period closed on 16 July 2017, when the scheme website was closed for questionnaire submissions. Highways England accepted submissions sent to the freepost address for a period of 2 weeks after the end of the public consultation period. All paper entries, letters and emails received were added to our feedback database for analysis.

5. Overview of consultation feedback

5.1. Analysis of feedback

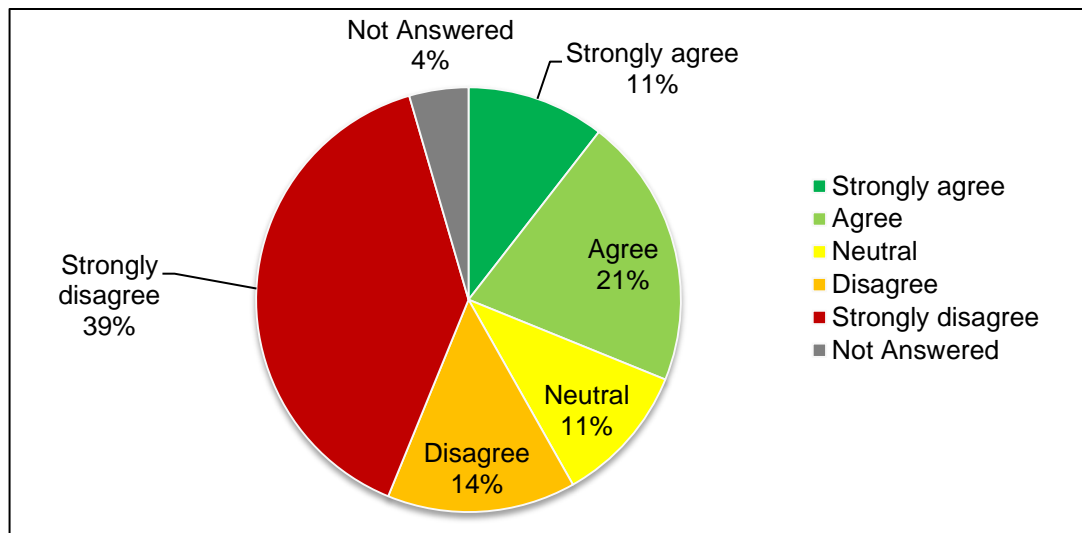
- 5.1.1. The consultation period closed on 16 July 2017 with 1,198 questionnaire responses received. The questionnaire responses received were primarily from members of the local community, with a number of statutory and non-statutory bodies submitting formal reports and letters in place of a questionnaire. Full copies of the letters and formal reports received from organisations can be found in Appendix J. The matters raised by submitted reports and letters have been reviewed and considered along with the free text comments provided via the questionnaire responses.
- 5.1.2. Of the 1,198 questionnaires received, 520 paper questionnaires were submitted to the freepost address. These were combined with the electronic responses and analysed collectively.
- 5.1.3. Analysis of the questionnaire feedback has identified 6 significant themes commonly arising from views expressed by respondents. The themes are:
- Junction proposals
 - Alternative routes
 - Highways design
 - Local community considerations
 - Views on the consultation
 - Environmental effects
- 5.1.4. All matters raised by individual members of the public have been collated and summarised under the above themes in feedback logs, ready for response by Highways England. As mentioned in the introduction to this report (see paragraph 1.1.2), Highways England's responses to the matters raised will be provided later in an updated version of this report which will be published when the preferred route for the scheme is announced following the further consultation being held.
- 5.1.5. Matters raised by statutory and non-statutory bodies have been separated out and summarised in a separate feedback log.
- 5.1.6. The results of the questionnaire responses are presented in Section 5.2 below, followed by summaries of the matters raised by theme in Section 5.3.

5.2. Consultation questionnaire results

5.2.1. The questionnaire results have been recorded and collated as presented below, starting with Question 1:

5.2.2. **Question 1 - The objectives of this scheme are detailed in the consultation brochure. To what degree do you believe the scheme proposal has achieved the objectives?**

Figure 5.1: Achievement of scheme objectives



5.2.3. **Figure 5.1** shows that 53% of respondents thought that the proposed scheme would not achieve the objectives set out in the consultation brochure.

5.2.4. **Question 2 - The scheme aims to relieve congestion on the strategic road network (A358/A303 corridor). How, and to what extent, do you believe your regular journeys will be affected?**

5.2.5. The following is representative feedback from respondents who state that their regular journeys will be improved:

“It won’t take me 45 minutes to travel 1.2 miles if the new road goes ahead.”

“Journeys between West Dorset and the M5 will be significantly improved and more reliable.”

“Traffic flow should improve and the holdups caused by slower moving vehicles would be alleviated.”

“It would definitely improve local journeys to and from work in Taunton.”

“Getting to the motorway will be much easier, and to Taunton which can now be a nightmare.”

“My daily commute will be improved.”

“My regular journeys on that route will be significantly shorter.”

- 5.2.6. The following is representative feedback from respondents who state that their regular journeys will not be improved:

“The scheme will have little impact on the traffic congestion through Henlade”

“As traffic through Henlade will remain as bad as ever my normal journeys will be unaffected.”

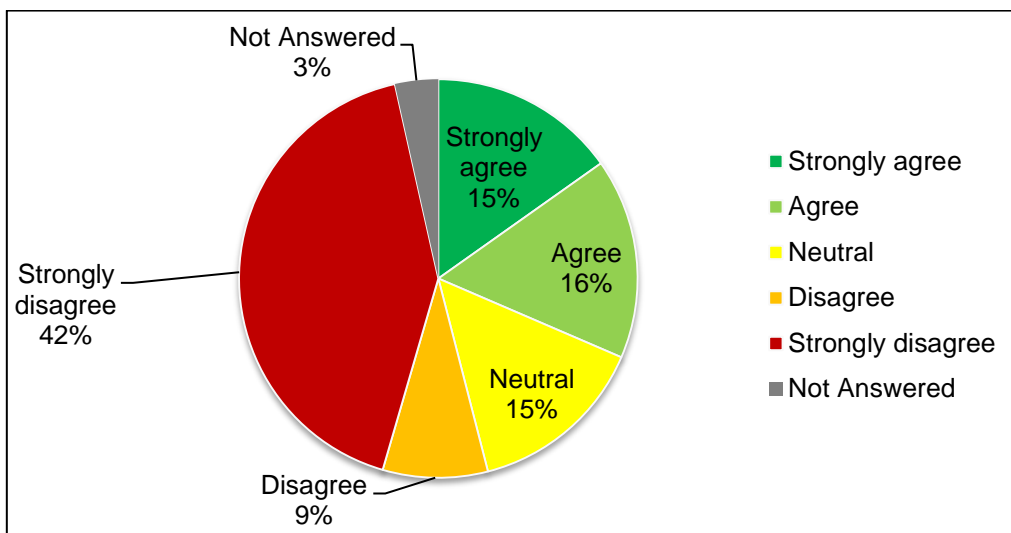
“I can’t see how this scheme makes any difference at all.”

“Access to A358 will be a problem if lanes to new junctions are inadequate.”

“Won’t have direct access onto the A358 so journey times will increase by getting to a junction to enter road.”

- 5.2.7. **Question 3 - A new roundabout motorway junction (Junction A) is proposed allowing all movements between the M5 and A358. To what extent do you agree with the proposed new junction at this location?**

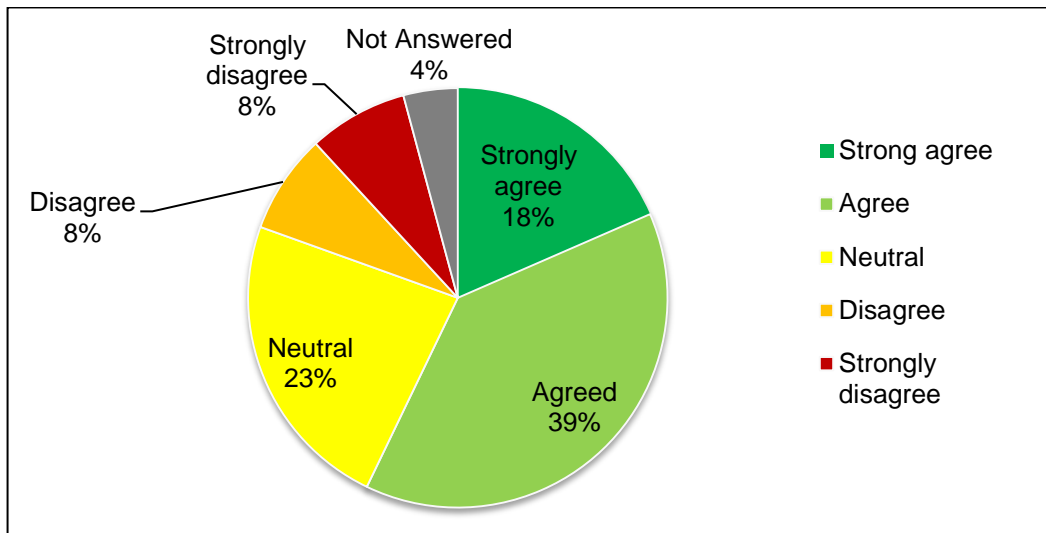
Figure 5.2: Extent of agreement with new junction at proposed location



- 5.2.8. **Figure 5.2** shows that 51% of respondents disagreed with the proposed location of the new junction.

5.2.9. **Question 4 - A new junction which allows traffic to leave and join the new road using slip roads without hindering traffic remaining on the road, is proposed to connect to the existing A358 near West Hatch (Junction B). To what extent do you agree with the proposed junction and its location?**

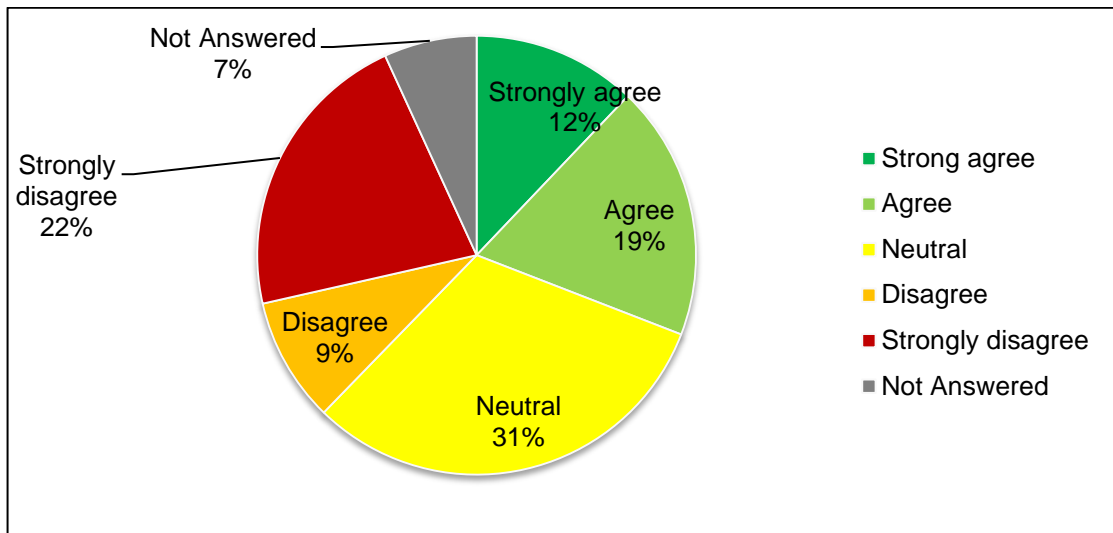
Figure 5.3: Extent of agreement with proposed junction and its location



5.2.10. **Figure 5.3** shows that 57% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed on proposals for a new junction on the A358 near West Hatch, with 16% disagreeing.

5.2.11. **Question 5 - A new junction which allows traffic to leave and join the new road (using slip roads without hindering traffic remaining on the road) is proposed at Park Barn Lane (Junction C) east of Ashill. To what extent do you agree with the proposed junction and its location?**

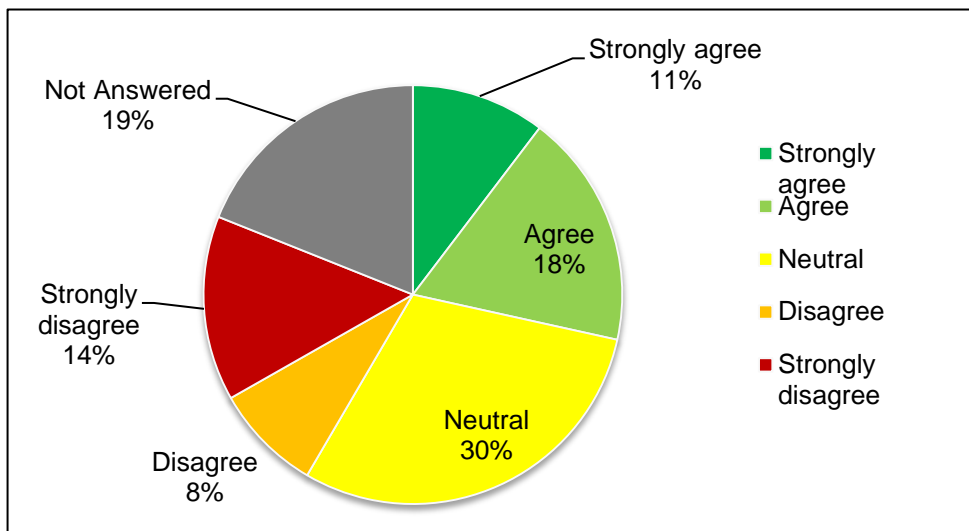
Figure 5.4: Extent of agreement with proposed junction and its location



5.2.12. **Figure 5.4** shows that there was a balance of opinion on the proposed junction at Park Barn Lane.

5.2.13. **Question 6 - Junction D is the existing Southfields Roundabout which will be upgraded to accommodate a new dual carriageway connection. Do you have any comments on the existing junction?**

Figure 5.5: Extent of agreement with proposed junction



5.2.14. **Figure 5.5** shows that the majority of respondents were neutral with regards to upgrading the existing Southfields Roundabout, with a further 29% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

5.2.15. Representative feedback from respondents who commented on the existing junction:

“A decent roundabout is needed to assist with the sheer flow of traffic. The traffic at the moment off the Ilminster bypass gets confused with which exit to take, and which lane. Nightmare for locals.”

“A smooth transition from 358 to 303 is of utmost importance.”

“Currently the roundabout causes some of the congestion. Direct access from the A358 to the A303 heading to Yeovil would help considerably.”

“From Taunton, the approach to the Southfields Roundabout on the A358 can tail back a long way as it is a lane here. Also, approaching the roundabout on the A303 from the east, it can be a bit confusing which exit to take for the M5 & Taunton and which lane on the roundabout to occupy.”

“This is a real 'pinch -point' for traffic flow, but the Ilminster by-pass also needs dualling to improve traffic flow.”

“I am against the proposed new route to take traffic from the south east and London and direct it towards Devon and Cornwall via to A358 and Taunton. By doing so will create more traffic on local roads. It will be of little economic benefit, and will merely increase the time and environmental cost of journeys from the south east to the south west.”

“The problem at Southfields roundabout is the volume of traffic on the A303. Trying to cross the roundabout to get into Ilminster is ridiculous, traffic is regularly backed up on the A358 from Chard as far back as the bridge over the A303 at Donyatt. Traffic on the A358 is also regularly queued often as far back as Stewley. I hope the roundabout upgrade will address this issue making travel and congestion problems easier for local motorists.”

“I am concerned about the environmental impact of this junction.”

“Any increased capacity will soon be swamped by the extra traffic flow.”

“Not much point unless the Ilminster bypass is dualled. As anyone local knows, it is an accident on the Bypass (usually on a high summer weekend) that brings the A358 to a halt.”

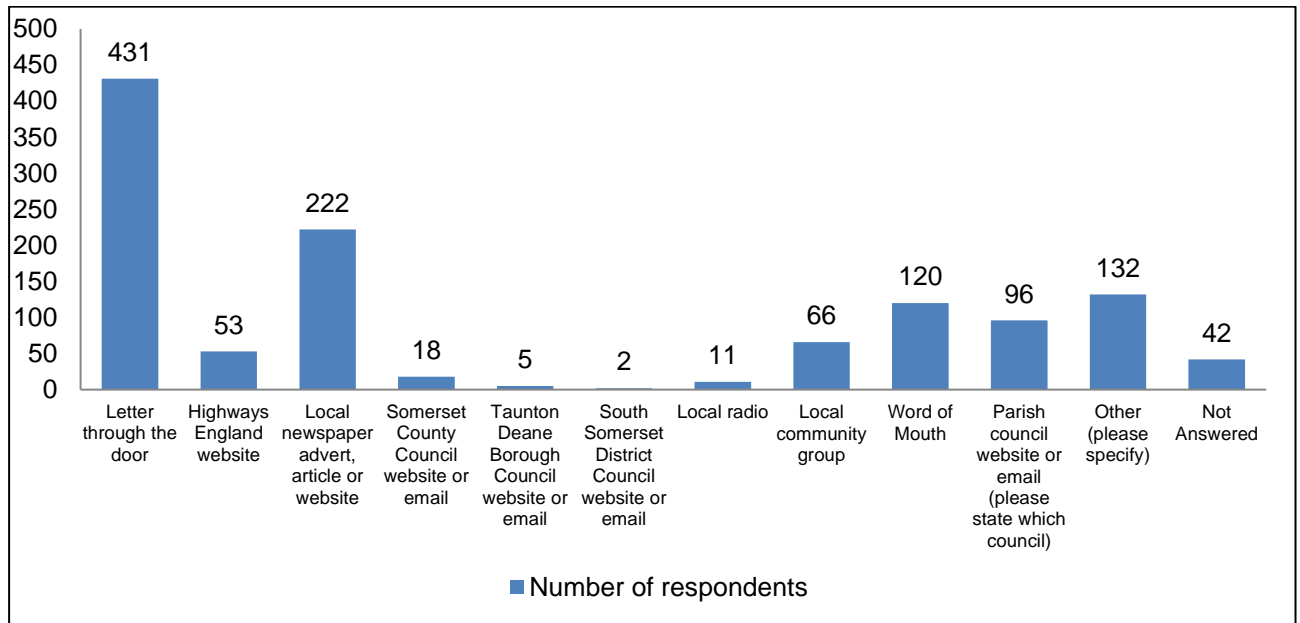
5.2.16. Question 7 - Are there any further aspects of the scheme that you feel we should take into consideration?

5.2.17. Highways England has analysed responses to Question 7, along with views expressed under the other questions, and has identified themes considered to be significant and common (see paragraph 5.1.3). All matters raised by individual respondents have been extracted and collated within the appropriate identified theme, as set out in the response logs in Appendix J.

5.2.18. Responses from statutory and non-statutory bodies and community organisations have been similarly analysed and the matters raised have been included in a separate response log also found in Appendix J.

5.2.19. **Question 8 - How did you find out about the A358 Taunton to Southfields scheme consultation?**

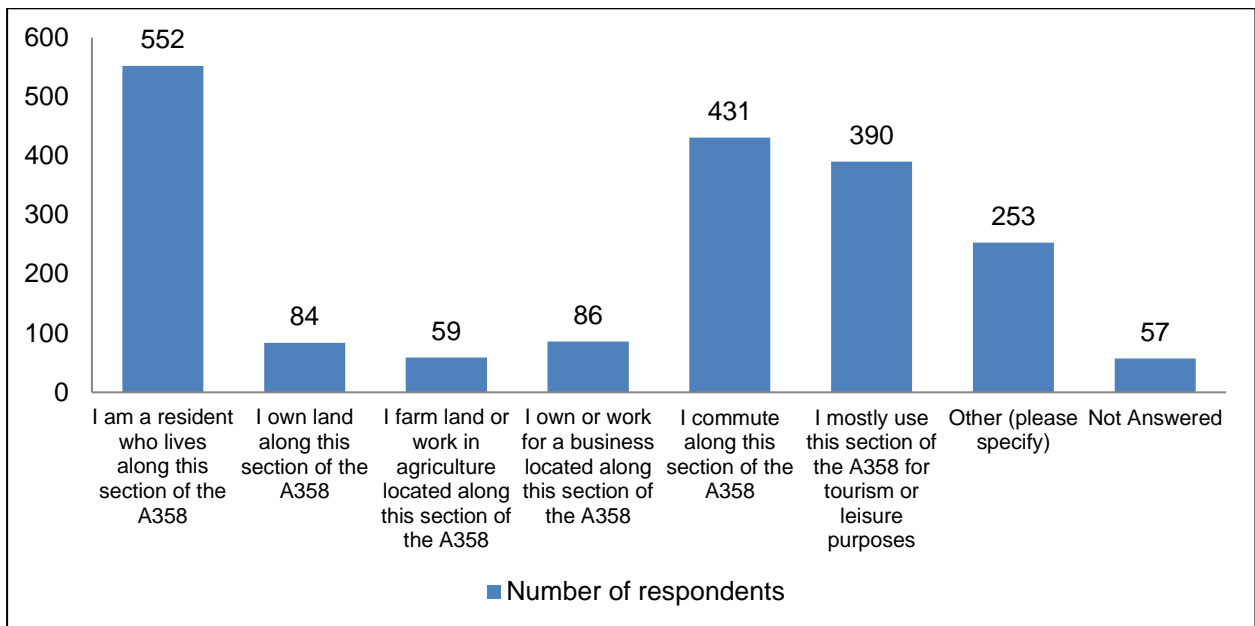
Figure 5.6: How respondents became aware of consultation



5.2.20. **Figure 5.6** shows that the greatest proportion of respondents became aware of the consultation by a letter received from Highways England. Local newspaper advertising, articles or websites was the next most frequent method of raising awareness. In the other classification the most common responses were from social media, including a Member of Parliament's profile, and through word of mouth.

5.2.21. **Question 9 – What is your interest in the scheme?**

Figure 5.7: Respondent’s interest in the scheme

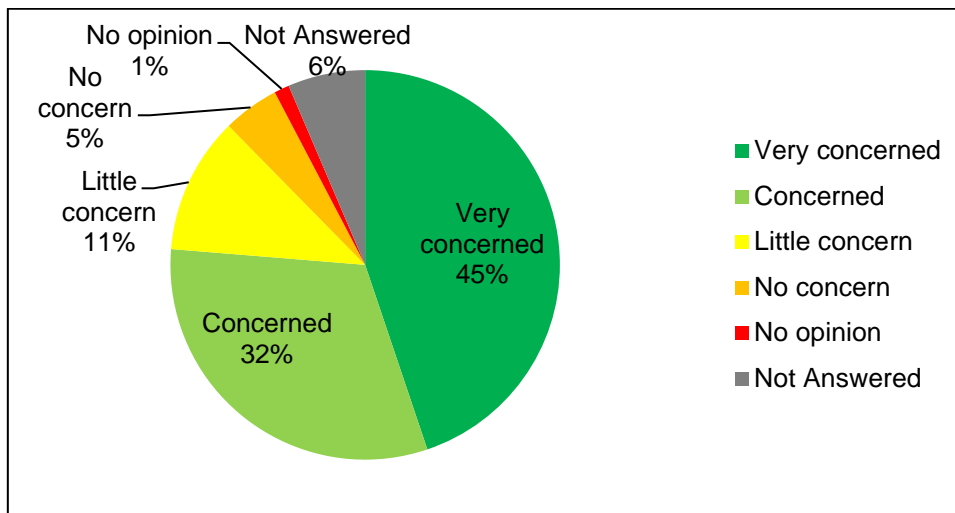


5.2.22. **Figure 5.7** shows that residents that live along the section of the A358 make up the biggest group of respondents. Those who commute and use the road for tourism or leisure made up the next biggest groups respectively.

5.2.23. **Question 10 - Please tell us how concerned you are about the following issues:**

Road Safety

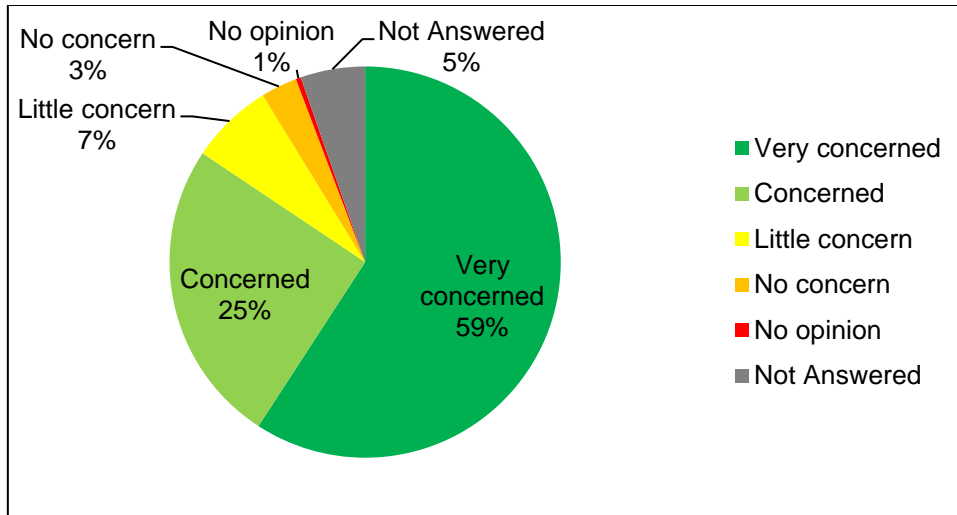
Figure 5.8: Respondent’s concern regarding road safety



- 5.2.24. **Figure 5.8** shows that 77% of respondents have concerns about road safety on the A358.

Traffic Congestion

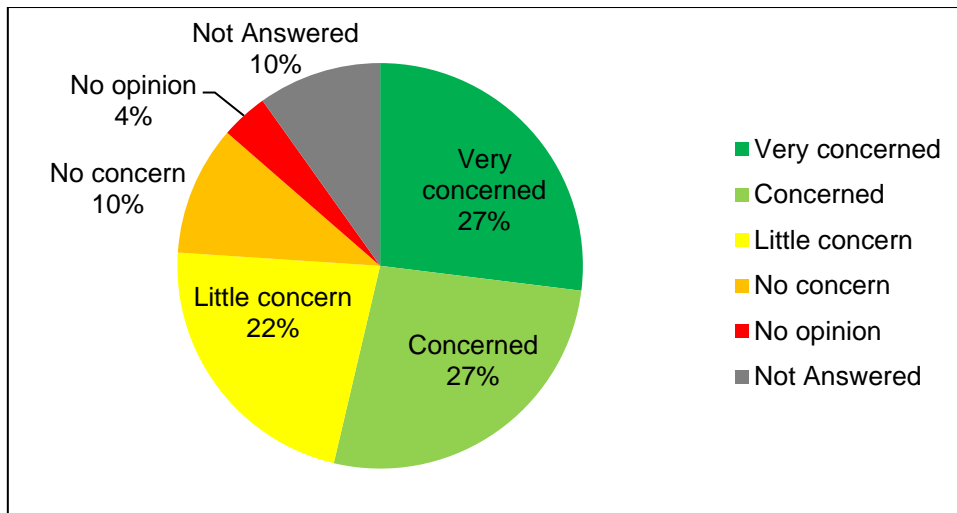
Figure 5.9: Respondent's concern regarding traffic congestion



- 5.2.25. **Figure 5.9** shows that 84% of respondents have concerns about traffic congestion on the A358.

Economic Growth

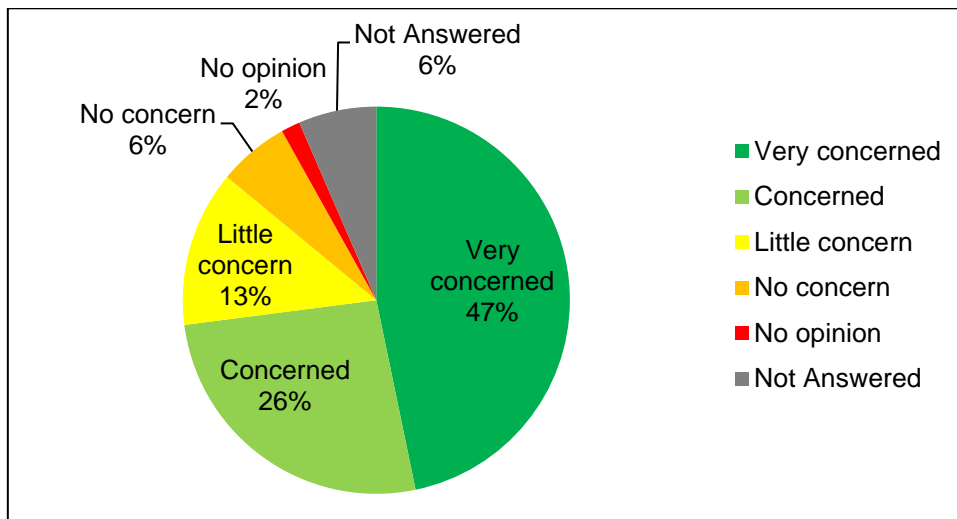
Figure 5.10: Respondent's concern regarding economic growth



- 5.2.26. **Figure 5.10** shows that 54% of respondents have concerns about economic growth.

Air Pollution

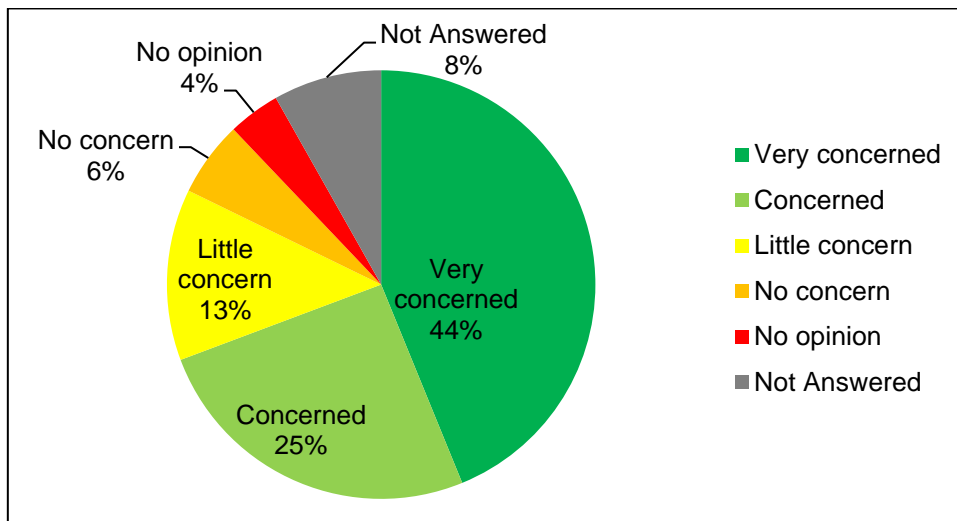
Figure 5.11: Respondent's concern regarding air pollution



5.2.27. **Figure 5.11** shows that 73% of respondents have concerns about air pollution.

Connectivity and access for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users

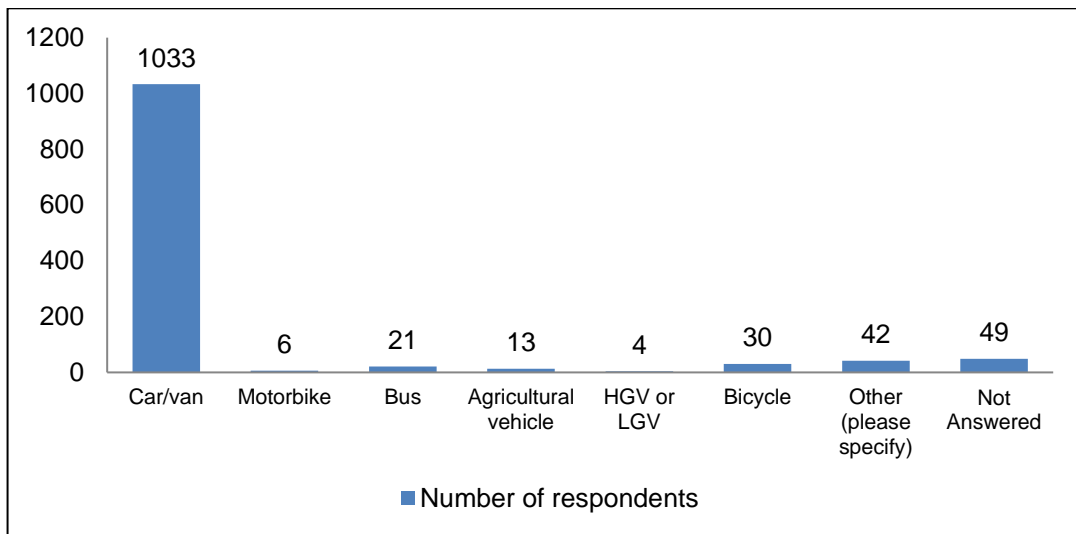
Figure 5.12: Respondent's concern regarding connectivity and access



5.2.28. **Figure 5.12** shows that 69% of respondents have concerns about pedestrian, cycle and equestrian connectivity and access.

5.2.29. **Question 11 - How do you normally travel on the route?**

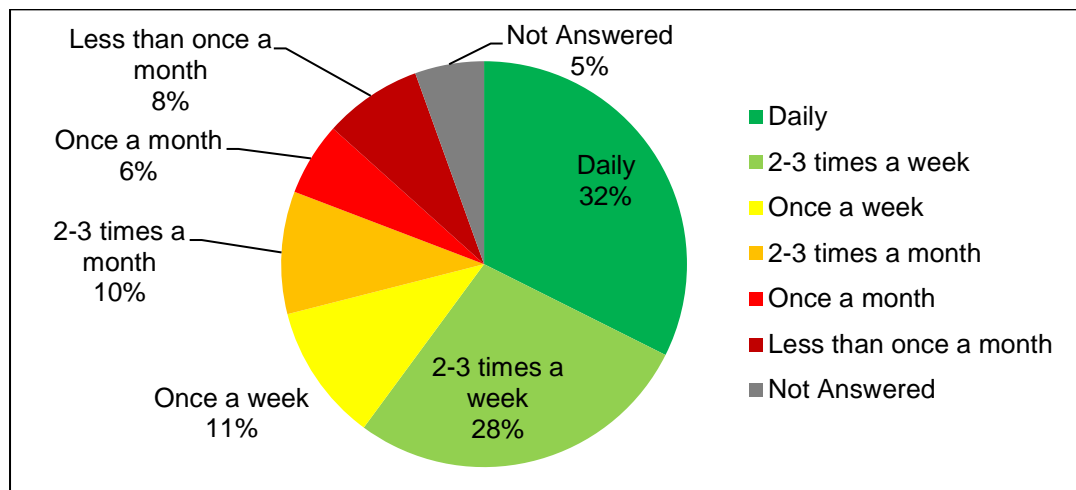
Figure 5.13: Respondent's method of travel along the A358



5.2.30. **Figure 5.13** shows that car or van is by far the most used method of transport by respondents on the A358.

5.2.31. **Question 12 - How often do you use this route?**

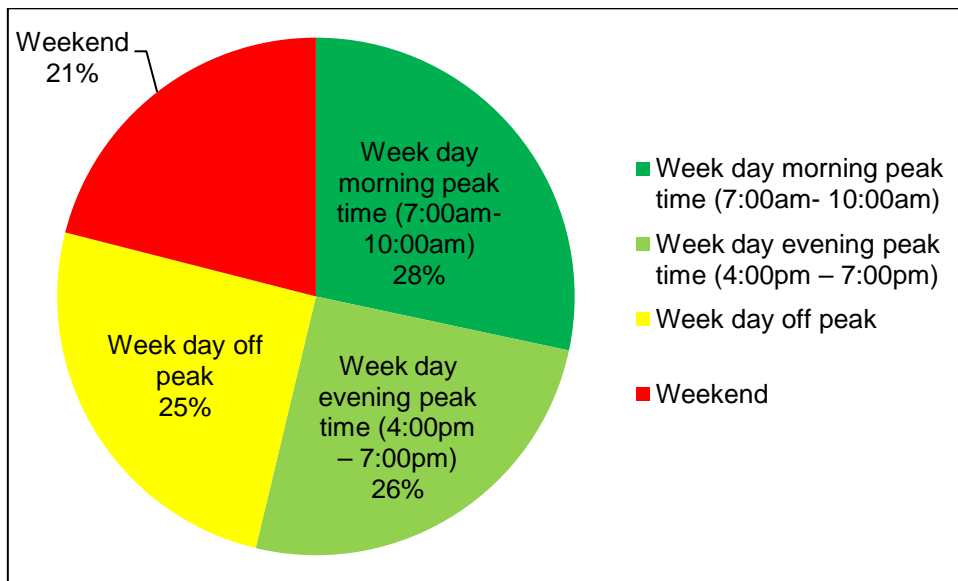
Figure 5.14: Respondent's frequency of travel along the A358



5.2.32. **Figure 5.14** shows that 60% of respondents use the route daily or 2-3 times a week.

5.2.33. **Question 13 - When do you use the route most?**

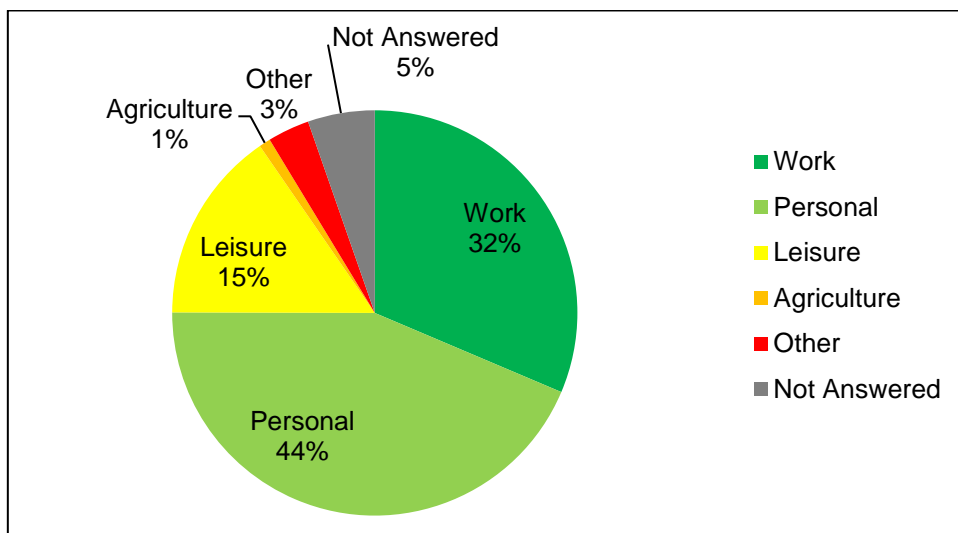
Figure 5.15: Respondent's periods of using the A358



5.2.34. **Figure 5.15** shows the distribution of respondents' usage of the A358 across peak and off-peak daytime periods and at weekends.

5.2.35. **Question 14 - Please tell us the main purpose for travelling on the A358?**

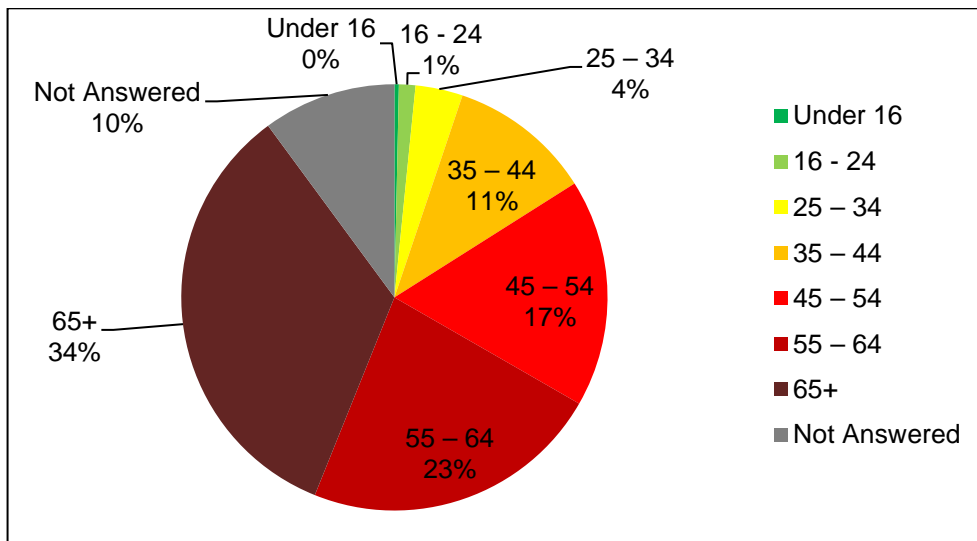
Figure 5.16: Respondent's main reason for travel on the A358



5.2.36. **Figure 5.16** shows that 91% of respondents use the A358 for work, leisure or personal reasons.

5.2.37. **Question 15 - What is your age?**

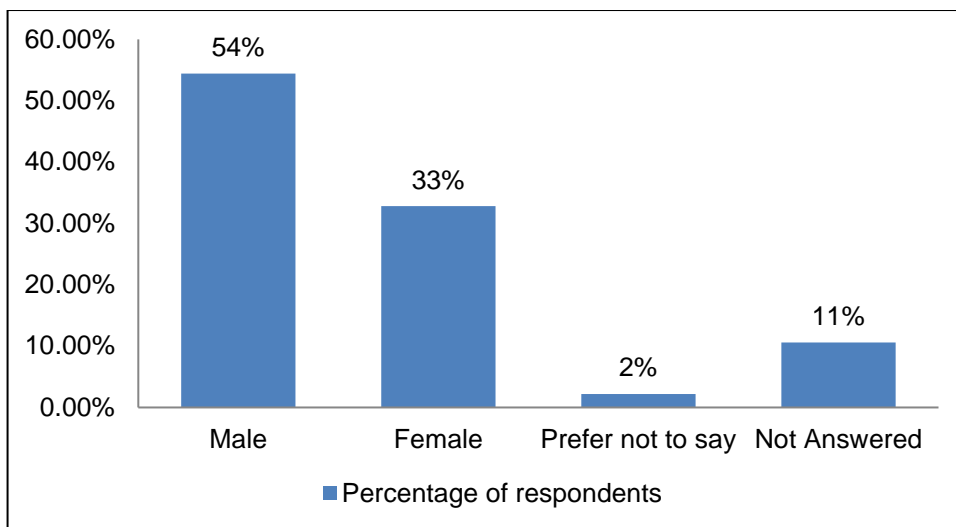
Figure 5.17: Respondent's age



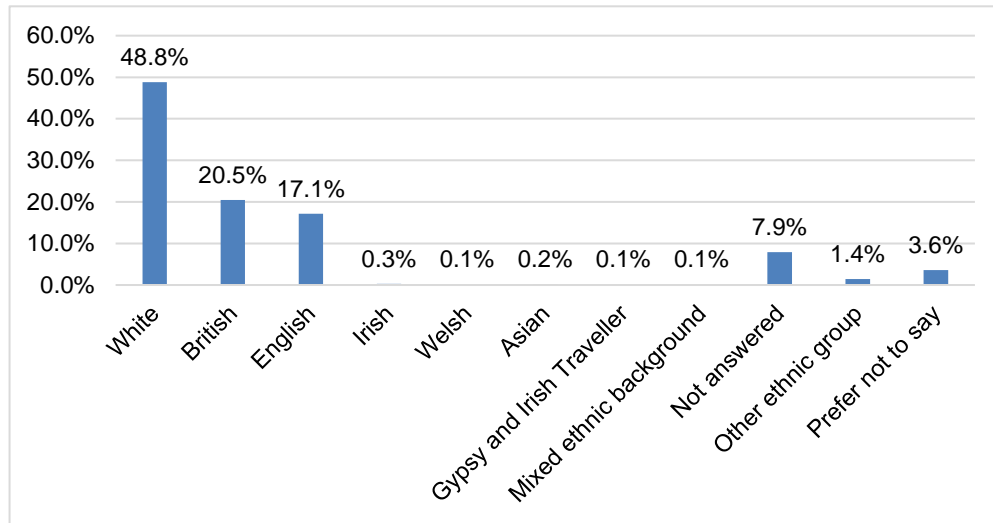
5.2.38. **Figure 5.17** shows that 57% of respondents were aged 55 or above.

5.2.39. **Question 16 - What is your gender?**

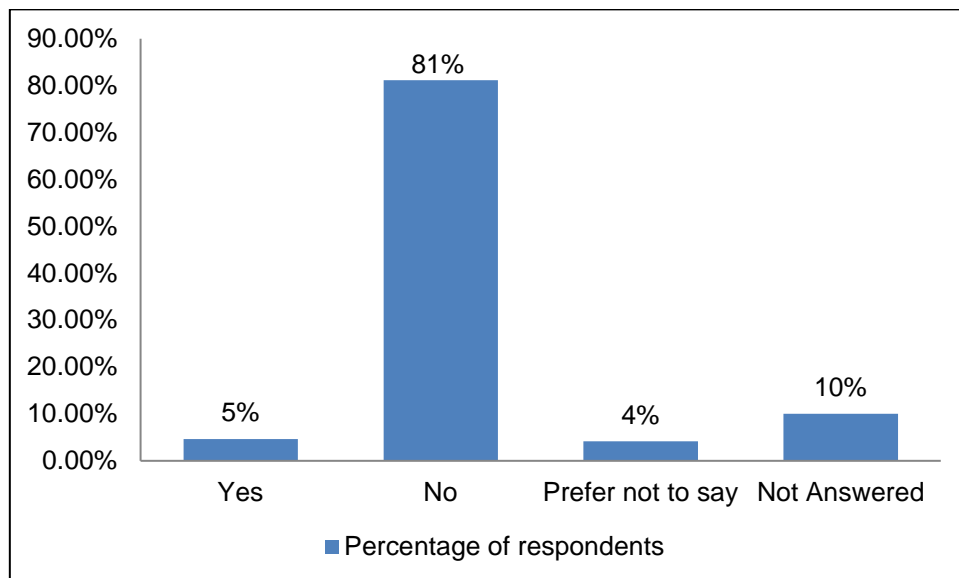
Figure 5.18: Respondent's gender



5.2.40. **Figure 5.18** shows that over half of respondents described themselves as male.

5.2.41. **Question 17 - How would you describe your national identity?****Figure 5.19: Respondent's self-described national identity**

5.2.42. **Figure 5.19** shows that the nearly half of respondents described themselves as white.

5.2.43. **Question 18 - Do you consider yourself to have a disability?****Figure 5.20 Disability of respondents**

5.2.44. **Figure 5.20** shows that 5% of respondents to question 18 considered themselves to have a disability.

5.3. Summary of matters raised by theme

- 5.3.1. As explained in paragraph 5.1.3, 6 themes have been identified which capture the matters raised by respondents. Those matters are summarised below, with greater detail set out in the feedback logs.

5.4. Junction proposals

- 5.4.1. Respondents commented on proposals for new junctions with the M5 (Junction A), with the existing A358 (Junction B) and near Ashill (Junction C), as well as with the Southfields Roundabout (Junction D). (See **Figure 3.1**, Chapter 3.)

Junction A

- 5.4.2. A number of respondents who commented on Junction A questioned whether drivers would use the new junction in preference to continuing to use the existing A358 through Henlade to travel into Taunton or to gain access to the M5 via Junction 25. Respondents also made comments around the proximity of the proposed junction to residential developments.

Junction B

- 5.4.3. A number of respondents felt that drivers would prefer using local roads to the new junction to access Taunton through Henlade, and raised concerns about the potential for rat-running and the problem of traffic still bottlenecking on the A303.

Junction C

- 5.4.4. As with Junction B, a number of respondents suggested that drivers would prefer using local roads passing through Staple Fitzpaine and Bickenhall and Ashill to the new junction. There was also concern that the close proximity of Junction B to Junction C would adversely affect properties along the present A358.

Junction D - Southfields Roundabout

- 5.4.5. Respondents highlighted the need for the Southfields Roundabout to have sufficient capacity for the predicted volumes of traffic. A number also expressed a preference for joining the A303 to the A358 instead of upgrading the roundabout. It was also noted that the improvements to the Southfields Roundabout would not benefit the road network unless improvements were also made to the A303 to accommodate additional capacity.

5.5. Alternative routes

- 5.5.1. Many respondents wanted to see alternative routes being considered for connecting with the M5, often referencing options described in the Technical Appraisal Report.

5.6. Highways design

- 5.6.1. Responses on highways design included an emphasis on the need to consider and accommodate non-motorised users safely and conveniently. There were also comments about flooding, safety and on the need to reduce traffic congestion.

Non-motorised users

- 5.6.2. Many respondents sought assurance that safe connectivity for non-motorised users would be maintained or improved.

Safety

- 5.6.3. Respondents highlighted the need for the design of junctions to accommodate safe movements by all users, motorised and non-motorised.

Traffic

- 5.6.4. Some respondents outlined concerns over whether the scheme as proposed would be effective in reducing congestion.
- 5.6.5. Respondents also suggested that journeys from local roads to gain access to the new dual carriageway, past Henlade, could result in slower and more challenging journeys than the alternative of continuing to use the current section of the A358 through Henlade.

5.7. Local community considerations

- 5.7.1. Respondents expressed concern about the potential impact of the proposals on local communities, highlighting in particular the need to consider the scheme's relationship with local roads and its impact on the local economy.

Local roads

- 5.7.2. Many respondents sought assurance that local connectivity between communities would be retained safely and efficiently.

Local economy

- 5.7.3. Some respondents stated that they felt the proposals would have a negative economic impact on Taunton by enabling traffic to bypass the town.
- 5.7.4. Other respondents noted that some local businesses rely on passing trade from traffic on the A358 and raised concerns about the consequences of reducing traffic on the existing road.

5.8. Views on the consultation

- 5.8.1. Respondents made a number of comments on the consultation process. These included a desire to express views on options other than those included in the consultation and wanting the consultation materials to contain sufficient detail to enable comments to be made. Issues were also raised about the effectiveness of consulting hard-to-reach groups especially non-motorised users, including cyclists and horse riders. Respondents also noted the impact of the timing of the consultation, with a pause due to the General Election.

5.9. Environmental effects

Respondents highlighted their concerns about wanting to see the countryside protected. Other issues raised included concerns about noise and light pollution, air quality, wildlife and habitats, drainage, cultural heritage and landscape.

6. Conclusions and next steps

- 6.1.1. Highways England would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the consultation and submitted a consultation response.
- 6.1.2. The consultation has highlighted a variety of views about the scheme. Having carefully considered the feedback received, Highways England has concluded that, before selecting a preferred route, it would be beneficial to hold a further consultation on its scheme proposals, with more options for connecting with the M5.
- 6.1.3. The purpose of this second period of non-statutory consultation will be to gather more feedback that can inform the decision-making on the choice of preferred route for the scheme. Highways England will publish the results of this consultation in a further report when the preferred route is announced.

Appendix A: Route options consultation

Department for Transport press release

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-route-to-provide-better-journeys-in-somerset>

News story

New route to provide better journeys in Somerset

From: Department for Transport, Highways England, and The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
 Part of: Road network and traffic
 Published: 28 March 2017

A358 upgrade to boost business and tourism in south-west.



A new route to upgrade a major south-west road has been proposed today (28 March 2017) by Transport Secretary Chris Grayling.

The A358 between the M5 at Taunton and the A303 Southfields will be made into a dual carriageway, leading to quicker journeys for motorists.

Currently, the road is a mix of single and dual carriageway, leading to bottlenecks and congestion. It also carries more vehicles than it was designed for, causing further delays.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

“ We are spending £15 billion on upgrading our major roads – the biggest investment in a generation.

“ This latest announcement is the next stage in our commitment to deliver improvements to the south-west. The A358 is a key route between the south-west and London and provides a vital link to Somerset communities. A dual carriageway will help existing businesses thrive and create opportunities for new companies as well as boosting tourism.

“ The upgraded route is long overdue, but we are now taking action to cut congestion on the A358 to give motorists quicker, safer and more reliable journeys.”

The government is also improving the nearby [A303 at Stonehenge](#) and between Sparkford and Ilchester.

Today, Highways England started its [consultation into the A358 upgrade](#). It will close on 20 May.

Jim O’Sullivan, chief executive of Highways England, said:

“ This scheme will take us a step closer to transforming the A303/A358 corridor into a new type of strategic road which is as safe and reliable as a motorway and where fast and reliable journeys are the norm.

“ Our consultation and programme of public exhibitions will give everyone a chance to hear more about the proposal and tell us what they think of our plans to deliver the scheme.”

The route would see the existing road upgraded between Southfields and West Hatch, where it will split into a new dual carriageway linking with M5 at a new junction at Shoreditch.

A new junction on the M5 would help support major development opportunities south of Taunton.

Alongside the upgraded road will be enhanced provision for cyclists, equestrians and pedestrians.

This consultation is your opportunity to express your views on the proposals ahead of further development work.

A preferred route will be announced this winter, with work starting in spring 2020.

View the proposed route options at the following events:

Date	Venue	Time
Friday 7 April 2017	Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Chestnut View, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton TA3 6TH	10:00am to 6.00pm
Saturday 8 April 2017	Taunton Racecourse, Orchard Portman, Taunton TA3 7BL	10:00am to 6.00pm
Monday 10 April 2017	Holiday Inn, Deane Gate Avenue, Somerset, UK TA1 2UA	12:00 to 8.00pm
Tuesday 11 April 2017	Monks Yard, Horton Cross Farm, Ilminster TA19 9PT	12:00 to 8.00pm
Monday 8 May 2017	Holiday Inn, Deane Gate Avenue, Somerset, UK TA1 2UA	10:00am to 5.00pm


Consultation materials will be available to view from 28 March until 20 May 2017 during normal opening hours at the following places:

- Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Rd, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE
- Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3XZ
- Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY
- South Somerset District Council, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2HT
- Ilminster Town Council, Council Offices/North St, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 0DG

Roads media enquiries

Media enquiries
020 7944 3021

Appendix B: Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)



Statement of Community Consultation

**A358 Taunton to Southfields
Dualling Scheme
Proposed Route Option**
**Non-Statutory Statement of
Community Consultation (SoCC)**

Date: 28 March 2017

Version: Final



Statement of Community Consultation

A338 Taunton to Southfields road improvement scheme –
Statement of Community Consultation - page 2 of 11

A358 Taunton to Southfields road improvement scheme - Statement of Community Consultation

Highways England is inviting feedback from the local community and road users on its proposal to improve the A358 between Taunton and Southfields in South Somerset.

This non-statutory Statement of Community Consultation (the statement) provides background to the proposed route option, seeks comments and explains how a future Development Consent Order (DCO) application to improve the A358 between Taunton and Southfields will progress.

The purpose of the statement is to set out how we will consult the local community and road users about the proposed route option.

The statement provides details of where further information can be obtained or viewed and how feedback by the local community and road users about the proposed route option can be provided to us.

Development Consent Order Process

The scheme is classified as a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. The Act sets out in Part 5, Chapter 2 (Pre-application procedure) a number of requirements for NSIPs. This includes a duty to consult with the local community, statutory consultees, landowners, local authorities, and other non-statutory consultees.

Before the scheme enters the formal consultation stage under the Act a period of non-statutory engagement will take place as part of the pre-application process. This period will include an options stage consultation enabling early involvement from the local communities and statutory consultees.

The proposed route option consultation

This statement advises how we will consult with the local community and road users during the non-statutory route options stage of the proposal to improve the A358 between Taunton and Southfields.

Public feedback received during the non-statutory route options stage consultation will be recorded and carefully considered by Highways England when selecting a preferred route option, before a period of statutory consultation is commenced.

Under Section 43 of the Act, we are required to consult with the relevant local authorities. As part of this stage preparation, consultation has been undertaken with host local authorities and adjoining local authorities. Their views have been taken into account to develop the proposed route option consultation approach and prepare this statement.

The Act requires us to submit an application to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for a DCO to build the scheme. The Secretary of State's role is to consider whether DCO approval should be given for major infrastructure projects like this scheme. On submission of the DCO application to PINS, we anticipate the full DCO application will be published by the end of 2018. The Secretary of State will consider the DCO application and decide on whether the scheme should go ahead.

The Government has published National Policy Statements (NPS) relating to the types of infrastructure projects the Secretary of State will examine. These provide frameworks for DCO applications to be considered against. Major road infrastructure proposals are subject to the NPS for National Networks.

The outcomes of the non-statutory proposed route option stage consultation will provide guidance that assists us to select a preferred scheme option. The results and findings from the consultation will help shape the approach to the formal pre-application consultation.

Consultation with people living in the vicinity of a proposed development site is an important aspect of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project proposal, and feedback received from the local community and road users during the proposed route option stage consultation and pre-application consultation will help to deliver a better final scheme application.

A period of formal consultation, as required by Section 47 of the Act, is scheduled to take place in the second half of 2017. This will take place following selection of a preferred route option and before a DCO application is made to PINS.

More information about the PINS, the Act and how to participate in the DCO process can be found on the PINS national infrastructure planning website at <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/> or by calling PINS on 0303 444 5000.

The road improvement scheme

The A303/A358 corridor is a vital connection between the South West and London and the South East. While the majority of the road has been dualled, there are still over 30 miles of single carriageway. These sections act as bottlenecks for users of the route resulting in congestion, particularly in the summer months and at weekends, delays to traffic travelling between the M3 and the South West and an increased risk of accidents.

The route corridor comprises multiple road standards, including single carriageways, single carriageways with overtaking lanes and dual carriageway sections with associated road junctions and varying speed limits between 40mph and 70mph.

The section of the A358 between Taunton and Southfields comprises a mixture of dual and single carriageway, with a number of existing junctions and private accesses. Many of these junctions suffer from poor visibility and are a contributing factor to the road's poor accident record.

The proposed scheme would provide a quality dual carriageway link from the M5 at Taunton to the A303, and is likely to include new and replacement slip roads, junctions and road bridges to replace existing junctions and direct access roads.

Consulting the community

The consultation is a process by which the local community living in the vicinity of the A358 between Taunton and Southfields and those that make use of the A358 road network between Taunton and Southfields are invited to participate in the consultation and provide feedback to the proposed route option.

Highways England wants to ensure that the local community and road users have the opportunity to understand the proposed route option proposal and to provide feedback. To do this we will undertake a period of consultation in spring 2017.

Consultation materials will detail information about the need for the schemes, proposed route option, including route improvement alternatives, proposed road access arrangements, traffic modelling, the DCO process and the scheme timescales.

We will be using a range of methods during the consultation period to ensure that the local community, road users and any other interested party have an opportunity to view and provide feedback on the proposed route option stage proposal.

The proposed route option consultation will include the following methodologies:

Method	Detail															
Public information events	Public information events will be held at the following locations and times along the route of the scheme.															
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Venue</th> <th>Time</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Friday 7 April 2017</td> <td>Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Village Rd, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton, TA3 6SG</td> <td>10.00am to 6.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Saturday 8 April 2017</td> <td>Taunton Racecourse (Owners and Trainers Paddock Stand), Orchard Portman, Taunton, TA3 7BL</td> <td>10.00am to 6.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Monday 10 April 2017</td> <td>Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Blackdown Suite), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA</td> <td>12.00 noon to 8.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tuesday 11 April 2017</td> <td>Monks Yard (Conference Room), Horton Cross Farm, Horton Cross, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9PT</td> <td>12.00 noon to 8.00pm</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Venue	Time	Friday 7 April 2017	Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Village Rd, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton, TA3 6SG	10.00am to 6.00pm	Saturday 8 April 2017	Taunton Racecourse (Owners and Trainers Paddock Stand), Orchard Portman, Taunton, TA3 7BL	10.00am to 6.00pm	Monday 10 April 2017	Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Blackdown Suite), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA	12.00 noon to 8.00pm	Tuesday 11 April 2017	Monks Yard (Conference Room), Horton Cross Farm, Horton Cross, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9PT	12.00 noon to 8.00pm
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<p>Public information points</p>	<p>The events will provide people with an opportunity to understand the need for the scheme, to view the proposed route option, speak with the project team and provide feedback.</p> <p>The local community, businesses and road users will be informed of the events through channels including written communications, the Highways England website and local media.</p> <p>Information on how to provide consultation feedback will be available at the events and the Highways England website.</p> <p>A printed questionnaire will be available for members of the public to provide feedback and these can be left with the project team, posted free of charge, emailed to us or a version can be completed online.</p> <p>Information will be available to members of the public detailing how to provide feedback online at the Highways England website.</p> <p>Information advertising the public information events will be on view at the following public information points.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Public Information Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Rd, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE</td> <td>Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3XZ</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY</td> <td>South Somerset District Council, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2HT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South Petherton Library, St. James Street, South Petherton, Somerset, TA13 5BS</td> <td>Martock Library, Martock Shopping Centre, Martock, Somerset, TA12 6DL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ilminster Meeting House & Arts Centre, East Street, Ilminster, TA19 0AN</td> <td>Henlade Post Office, Henlade, Taunton TA3 5DH</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Consultation brochures will be available at public information points for the local community and other road users to review and take away.</p> <p>Information about how the local community, businesses and other road users can provide consultation feedback will be available at the public information points.</p>			Public Information Points		Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Rd, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE	Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3XZ	Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY	South Somerset District Council, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2HT	South Petherton Library, St. James Street, South Petherton, Somerset, TA13 5BS	Martock Library, Martock Shopping Centre, Martock, Somerset, TA12 6DL	Ilminster Meeting House & Arts Centre, East Street, Ilminster, TA19 0AN	Henlade Post Office, Henlade, Taunton TA3 5DH
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	<p>A printed questionnaire will be available for members of the local community and other road users to provide feedback at the public information points and these can be posted free of charge, emailed to us or a version can be completed online.</p> <p>Information detailing how to provide feedback online at the Highways England website will be available.</p>
Parish council area group meetings	<p>We will meet with representatives from the parish councils located within the vicinity of the route option, to seek information on localised issues, ahead of the public consultation events.</p>
Project website	<p>Details of the scheme background, the need for the scheme and the proposed route options will be provided on the scheme web page at www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields</p> <p>Supporting route option documents including the consultation brochure will be available to download or print.</p> <p>A questionnaire will be available for members of the local community and other road users to provide feedback online.</p>
Written communication	<p>We will send 7,289 residents and businesses inside the consultation zone (see Appendix 1.1) an information letter that explains the proposed route option and the issues being consulted on. The letter will invite people to the public information events and detail how consultation feedback can be provided to us.</p> <p>Other key stakeholder organisations and special interest groups will also receive information letters, explaining the proposed route option and the issues being consulted on. The letter will invite recipients to the public information events and detail how consultation feedback can be provided to us.</p> <p>Individuals or organisations that have registered to receive further communications on the Highways England scheme web page will be sent information emails, explaining the proposed route option and the issues being consulted on. The emails will invite recipients to the public information events and detail how consultation feedback can be provided to us.</p>
Consultation brochure	<p>We have produced a consultation brochure providing information about the proposed route option, the need for the scheme, the issues being consulted on, the DCO process and the scheme timescales. The brochure will be available to view on the Highways England scheme web page.</p> <p>The consultation brochure will also be available at public information events and public information points.</p>

	Copies of the consultation brochure can be provided free of charge by request to Highways England.
Use of local authority and parish council communications channels	We will promote the proposed route option consultation through local authority and parish council communication channels, including their respective websites, newsletters and social media pages.
Representatives at local groups and forums	We welcome contact from local groups and forums. Where it is considered that there is a relevant interest and where a visit is considered proportionate and appropriate, we will attend a local event to discuss the proposed route option consultation.
Hard to reach groups	<p>An appropriate and proportionate 'hard to reach' engagement plan will be developed with the assistance and agreement of relevant local authority personnel and third sector organisations.</p> <p>Appropriate and proportionate consultation tools for hard to reach groups could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations to community groups and organisations • Appropriate direct engagement with, for example, younger people and disabled people and representative groups • Provision of appropriate and accessible materials in local community/hard to reach centres • Provision of appropriate and accessible materials (i.e. in large print and alternative languages if requested) • Venues chosen for public events to be compliant with the Equality Act 2010
Proposed Route option consultation updates	The local community and other road users will be updated about progress of the proposed route option stage consultation through channels including written communications, the Highways England website, local media and local authority websites, newsletters and social media.
Consultation feedback	<p>Written feedback can be made either online or in writing to Highways England at the following addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A358TauntontoSouthfieldsDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk • A303 Taunton to Southfields Dualling, 2/07K Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6HA
Media	The proposed route option stage consultation will be publicised through online media channels by means of a Highways England press release detailing the consultation process and explaining how the local community and road users can provide feedback.



Documents available for inspection

Scheme summary information and copies of the consultation material will be available online and will be updated regularly at the Highways England scheme web page.

Next steps

Feedback provided by members of the local community and road users during the proposed route option stage consultation will be recorded by Highways England. After the consultation period ends, the views and opinions expressed during the consultation will be considered and project team responses recorded in a consultation report.

Please contact Highways England to find out more about this scheme by:

- visiting the scheme webpage at www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields
- emailing the project team at A358TauntontoSouthfieldsDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk
- telephoning the project team on 0300 123 5000 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
- writing to the project team at A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling, 2/07K Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6HA

The deadline for responses is 11.59pm on 20 May 2017

Consultation zone

The consultation zone covers a geographical area of approximately 1.5 kilometres from any point on the proposed route option under consultation. In certain areas the 1.5 kilometre zone has been extended to include additional population centres. A map showing the consultation zone boundary is in appendix 1.1.

Local authorities consulted

Host local authorities: (Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council)

Adjoining local authorities: (Devon County Council, Dorset County Council, Wiltshire Council, West Somerset District Council, Mid Devon District Council, East Devon District Council, Mendip District Council, North Devon District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, North Somerset Council, Bath & North East Somerset Council, West Dorset District Council, North Dorset District Council)

Public information event venues, dates and times

A minimum of four public events will be held during the consultation period. These events will be located at strategic locations along the proposed route option. The venues will be chosen based on the suitability of the building, ease of access for all members of the local community, and available facilities.

The public exhibitions will be located at the following venues and times:

Date	Venue	Time
Friday 7 April 2017	Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Village Rd, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton, TA3 6SG	10.00am to 6.00pm
Saturday 8 April 2017	Taunton Racecourse (Owners and Trainers Paddock Stand), Orchard Portman, Taunton, TA3 7BL	10.00am to 6.00pm
Monday 10 April 2017	Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Blackdown Suite), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA	12.00 noon to 8.00pm
Tuesday 11 April 2017	Monks Yard (Conference Room), Horton Cross Farm, Horton Cross, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9PT	12.00 noon to 8.00pm
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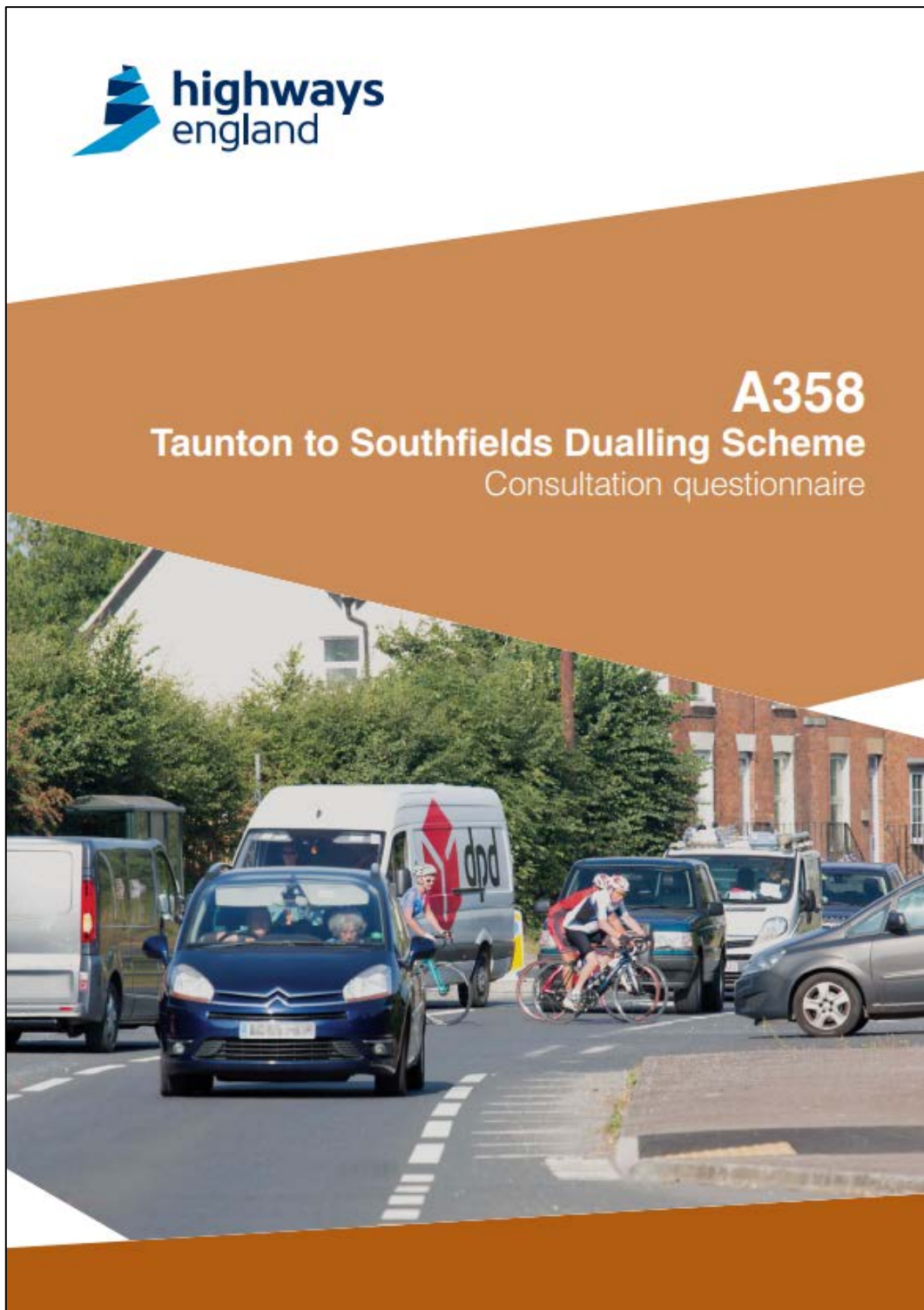
Public information point locations

Consultation materials will be available to view at the below listed venues. Materials available for viewing at these locations will include the consultation brochure and questionnaire for the proposed route option. Visitors will be able to take a copy of the consultation brochure and questionnaire away with them. All other materials will be available to view on the Highways England website - www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields

Public Information Points	
Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Rd, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE	Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3XZ
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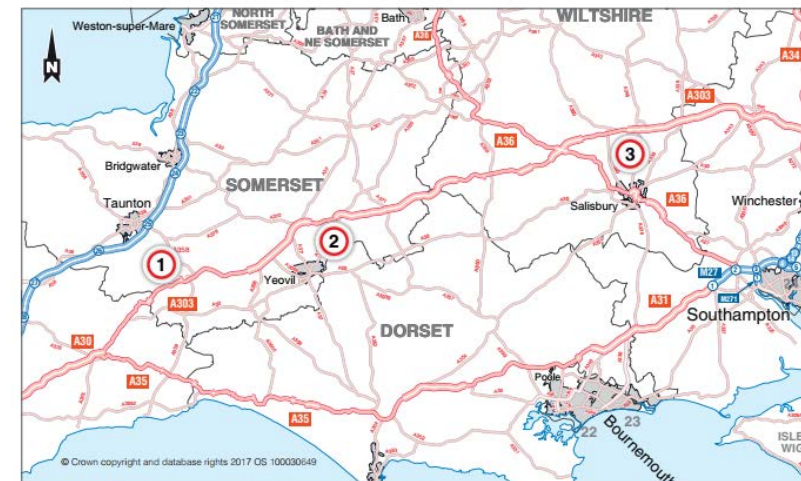
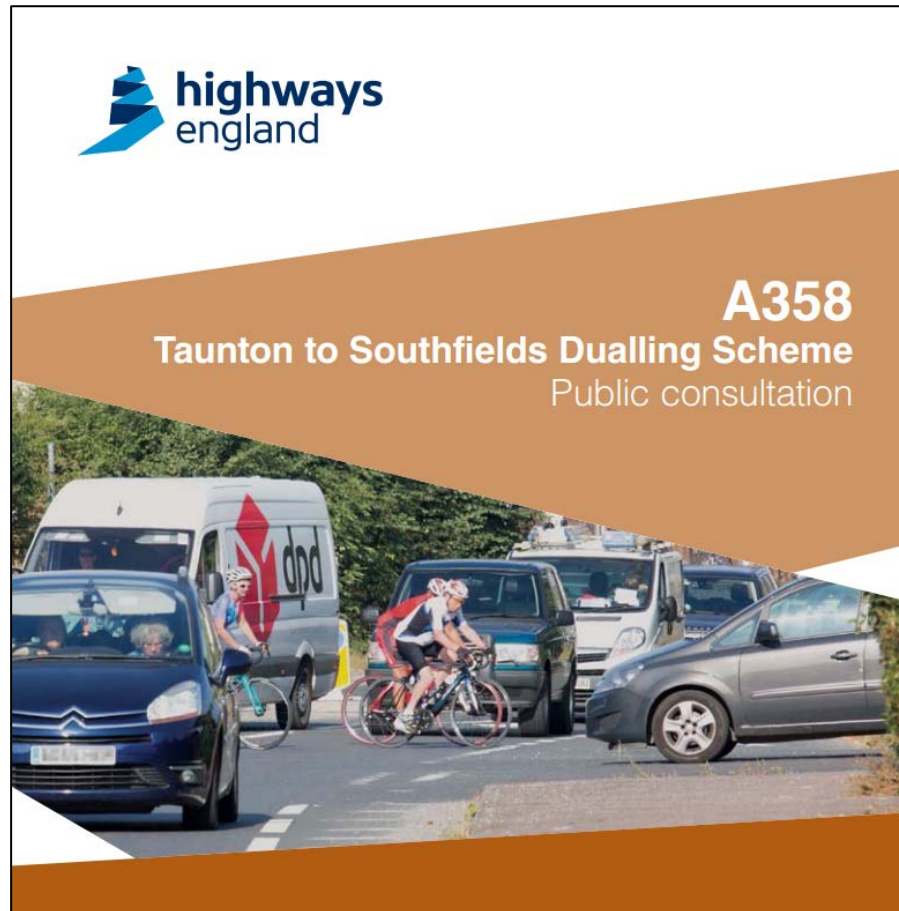
Appendix C: Public consultation questionnaire

https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a358-taunton-to-southfields/supporting_documents/M160540_A358%20questionnaire_singlepage.pdf



Appendix D: Public consultation brochure

https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a358-taunton-to-southfields/supporting_documents/A358%20scheme%20consultation%20brochure_digital_revised_final%202.pdf



A303/A358 route corridor schemes

Introduction

Highways England is consulting on proposals to upgrade the A358 between the M5 at Taunton and the A303.

The scheme objectives are to relieve congestion, support economic growth and improve safety on one of the busiest stretches of the A303/A358 corridor that connects the south west to London and the south east.

There are important decisions to be made as the scheme progresses and your views will help to inform how the route will be taken forward to the next design stage.

Please take the time to read this brochure, attend a public consultation event and provide us with your comments by returning a completed questionnaire. Information can also be found online at:

www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields

Background

The A303/A358 corridor is a vital connection between the south west and London and the south east connecting people, communities and businesses.

The existing A358 between Taunton and Southfields is a mix of dual and single carriageway. Where two lanes merge into one, these bottlenecks lead to delays and uncertain journey times. In addition to this, the number of vehicles using the existing road exceeds the designed capacity further contributing to delays. An improvement to this section of road had been considered previously, with recommendations to link a dualled A358 to the M5 near Taunton being made in 2002. Work was carried out, leading to a public consultation on a single route option in 2007, but was not progressed further.

The Government's *Road Investment Strategy: 2015/16 to 2019/20* sets out the intention to transform connectivity between London and the south east and the south west by improving the route from the M3 motorway to the M5 at Taunton. To support this, we are developing three major road improvement schemes along the A303/A358 corridor:

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

1

Looking at the options

We have considered a range of route options that have the potential to improve the A358 between Taunton and Southfields. These were assessed in terms of traffic capacity, journey time reliability, road safety, economic growth, community access and environmental considerations. The assessment also took into account affordability of the scheme options as well as the practical constraints of construction.

As an example, in the consideration of options, upgrading of the A358 along its entire existing route alignment was assessed. This option was discounted for a number of reasons including:

- traffic capacity reasons on the A358 in the proximity of junction 25 of the M5 motorway
- the presence of an Air Quality Management Area at Henlade
- the direct impact on existing residential properties
- the existing road alignment is unsuitable for upgrading to a high speed dual carriageway
- separation and disconnection of existing communities in the Henlade area
- potential adverse impacts on the future employment development site near M5 junction 25

To help the identification of a suitable option, discussions have taken place with key stakeholders including local authorities, parish councils and environmental bodies. Working

together has helped inform our understanding of the priorities, development plans and community needs from a local perspective.

Various surveys have been undertaken and continue in the area to make sure that we understand important local information. We have recorded how people walk, cycle and ride along the public rights of way and bridleways to make sure the needs of non-motorised users are taken into account. In addition, environmental studies are being carried out to search for evidence of protected wildlife. We want to avoid disturbing protected species' habitats and, where possible, take opportunities to improve local diversity.

Consulting with you

Following our assessment, we are proposing a route that is in line with the Government's road investment strategy and is sensitive to the expectations and requirements of local communities.

Once we have received your feedback, the preferred route will be announced and a more detailed design will be drawn up. We expect to deliver the scheme in phases, which will help reduce disruption across the route corridor during construction and minimise any adverse impacts on both road users and local communities.

2

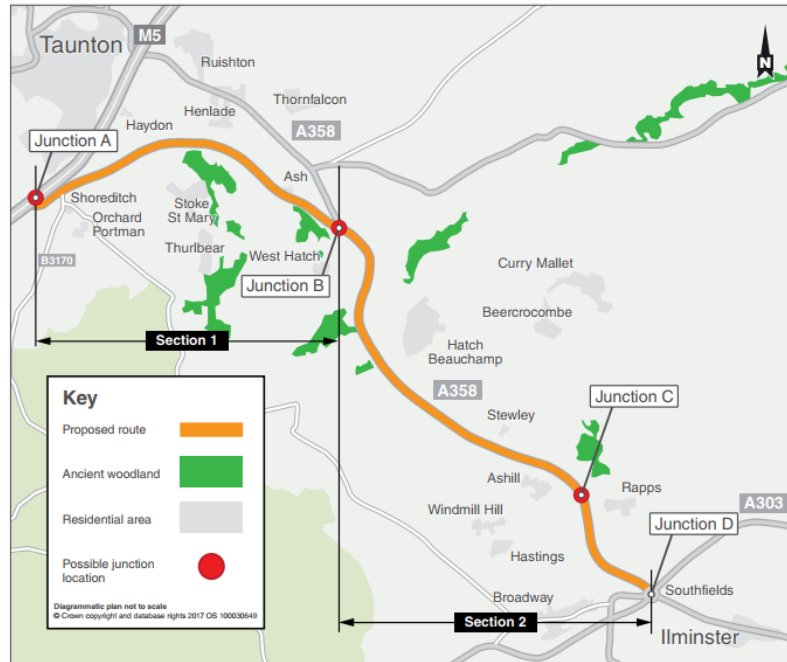
Consultation sections

We have divided the route on which we are consulting into two separate sections to help us focus on your comments.

These are:

Section 1 – New motorway junction and dual carriageway section from the M5 to West Hatch Lane

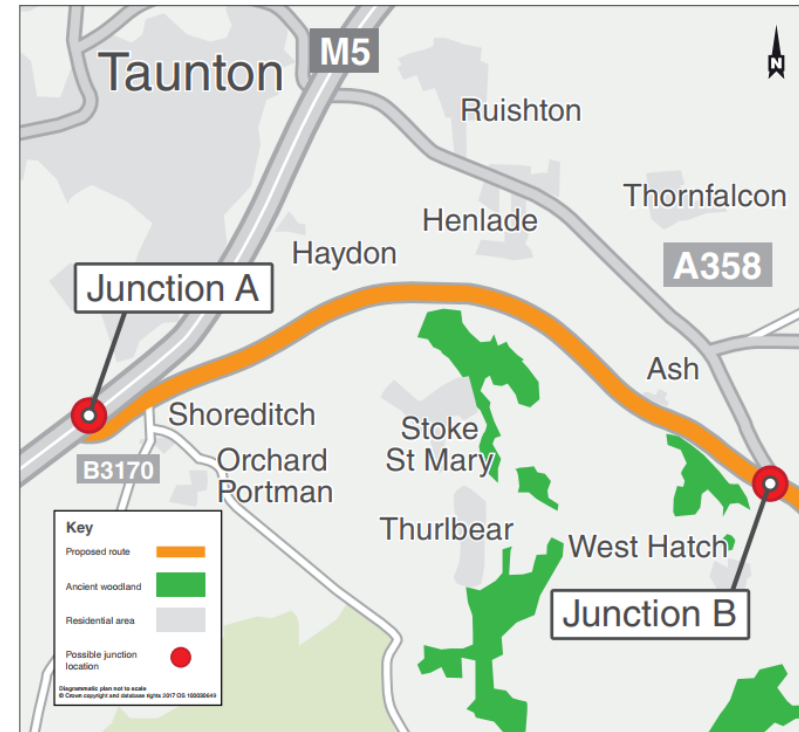
Section 2 – Widening of the existing carriageway from West Hatch Lane to Southfields Roundabout



3

Section 1

New motorway junction and dual carriageway section from the M5 to West Hatch Lane



4

This section connects the M5 motorway with the existing A358 at West Hatch Lane, and includes the following:

- A new M5 motorway junction located south of Taunton (Junction A), sited between the existing Junctions 25 and 26 (at Killams Avenue), permitting all-direction movements between the M5 and the new dual carriageway
- A new section of dual carriageway from the M5 which:
 - Crosses the B3170 Shoreditch Road (north of the village of Shoreditch and Taunton Racecourse)
 - Crosses Stoke Road approximately 800 metres west of the village of Stoke St Mary
 - Passes approximately 300 metres south of the settlement of Haydon and 600 metres north of the village of Stoke St Mary
 - Passes approximately 300 metres south of the village of Lower Henlade
 - Passes north of Stoke Wood, Henlade Wood, Huish Copse and Strangeways Copse
- Provision of a new grade separated junction at West Hatch Lane to connect to the existing A358 road alignment (Junction B)
- Ability to use Junction B to connect to the A378 and other local areas including Thornfalcon, Ruishton and Henlade
- Provision of new bridges or underpasses at locations to be determined to ensure good connectivity is retained across the dual carriageway for motorists, cyclists, equestrians, and pedestrians

Expected benefits of Section 1 include:

- Provision of a modern dual carriageway for A358 traffic travelling to and from the M5 motorway
- All-directions traffic connection between the M5 motorway and A358 dual carriageway
- Retention of the A358 between West Hatch Lane and M5 Junction 25 for local traffic and as an alternative route
- Removal of traffic from the existing A358 between West Hatch and M5 Junction 25 helping to reduce periods of congestion
- The new all-direction movements M5 motorway junction located south of Taunton (Junction A) will improve route resilience, journey time reliability and support economic growth
- Release of road capacity on the existing A358 to support economic growth at the Junction 25 employment development zone
- Safer crossing points for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians

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Potential impacts of Section 1 include:

- The A358 dual carriageway route would pass through:
 - through relatively undeveloped countryside
 - between residential areas including Shoreditch, Haydon and Stoke St Mary
 - close to a number of farms and through farmland
 - close to designated Ancient Woodlands
- Visibility from some elevated sections of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Some adverse visual impact for residential properties located alongside the M5 motorway near Junction A
- Limited temporary traffic management measures, such as temporary traffic lights, would be required to help reduce inconvenience at West Hatch during construction
- Construction periods would be scheduled to minimise adverse impacts on residential properties located near the M5
- Construction periods would be scheduled to minimise temporary impacts on residential properties, farms and businesses located near to the A358 dual carriageway
- Mitigation measures for wildlife habitats affected by the dual carriageway route alignment

Construction considerations of

Section 1 include:

- Temporary M5 motorway lane closures would be required during construction of a motorway connection at the Junction A location

We are seeking your feedback on Section 1. Please complete the questionnaire so we can capture your views.

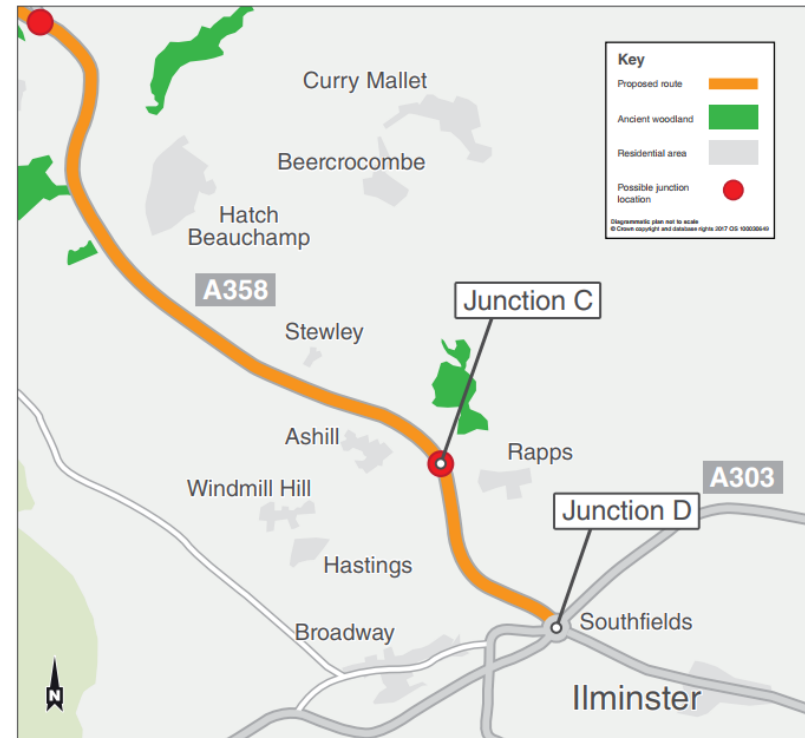
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7

Section 2

Widening of the existing carriageway from West Hatch Lane to Southfields Roundabout



8

This section deals with the alignment of the proposed A358 dual carriageway between West Hatch Lane and Southfields Roundabout.

Details of the proposal include:

- Proposed widening of the existing A358 to dual carriageway standard between West Hatch Lane and Southfields Roundabout
- Possible new junction located at Park Barn Lane to the east of Ashill (Junction C)
- Southfields Roundabout upgraded to accommodate a new dual carriageway connection (Junction D)
- Provision of bridges or underpasses at locations to be determined to ensure connectivity is retained across the dual carriageway for motorists, cyclists, equestrians and pedestrians

Expected benefits of Section 2 include:

- Greater traffic capacity of the dual carriageway will improve existing congestion issues
- Improved safety by removal of direct access to the dual carriageway from fields, properties and side roads
- Safer access points from the local road network to the dual carriageway at new and upgraded junctions
- Safer crossing points for pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians
- Continued use of the existing road corridor minimising wider environmental impacts of the dual carriageway

Potential impacts of Section 2 include:

- Removal or rerouting of direct access from existing side roads and privately owned land and property to the new dual carriageway standard road
- Existing properties in the immediate proximity of a new dual carriageway may be adversely impacted by construction or operation of a new dual carriageway
- Periods of traffic disruption during construction would require management to minimise disruption to road users and local communities

Construction considerations of Section 2 include:

- Possible overnight closures for the construction of bridges.
- Construction periods would be scheduled to minimise temporary impacts on residential properties, farms and businesses located near to the A358 dual carriageway
- Maintain existing two-way traffic flows.
- Mitigation measures for wildlife habitats affected by the dual carriageway route alignment

We are seeking your feedback on Section 2. Please complete the questionnaire so we can capture your views.



Supporting economic growth

Unlocking the potential for economic growth in the area has been a key objective in developing our route option proposals. The new junction at the M5 motorway (Junction A) will provide a significant capacity enhancement to the network. It is expected that increases in traffic demand could be accommodated at the new junction, supporting major development opportunities in the area south of Taunton.

Improving the performance of the A358 between Taunton and Southfields with more reliable journey times will help support the growth of existing businesses and support the establishment of new businesses. This will also provide a boost to the already healthy tourism sector in the area and for tourists travelling to and from the south west peninsula.

Creating a safer, more reliable, free-flowing road will help to reinforce the message that the south west is open for business.

Caring for the environment

Understanding the impact on the environment and community along the A358 corridor is very important to us. Our aim is to minimise any adverse effects while ensuring that wider opportunities for environmental improvement created by this scheme are implemented.

The area surrounding the A358 between Taunton and Southfields has a number of sensitive and valued environmental sites, as well as a number of dwellings and farm businesses. We have identified environmental constraints and used this information to help us develop the scheme proposals. A map showing the constraints is available on our website:

www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields

Work is underway to collect further environmental information which will help us to select a preferred route and plan how to mitigate adverse impacts on the environment. This could include planting, habitat creation and species protection.

Tell us your views

This is the first stage in our consultation process. We would like to know what you think about the route proposal. We will listen to your views and publish a consultation report which summarises your feedback and how they will be considered to inform the detailed design stage.

To help us with this, please complete a questionnaire which you can access online at our website:

www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields

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Paper copies of the questionnaire will be available at the public events, at public information points and can be requested from the project team by:

Emailing

A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk

Writing to us at

A358 Taunton to Southfields Project Team
Highways England
2/07k Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6HA

Calling us on

0300 123 5000 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Next steps

Selecting a preferred route

This consultation is your opportunity to express your views on the current proposals ahead of further development and final selection of a preferred route.

After the consultation ends, we will publish a report summarising the responses. Subject to the findings of the consultation, a preferred route announcement is likely to be made in Winter 2017.

There will be another public consultation period in Spring 2018 that will ask for additional feedback on details of the selected preferred route.

The Development Consent Order application process

This scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. As such, we are required to make an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to gain authorisation to construct the scheme.

Following the submission of the application, the Planning Inspectorate will hold a public examination before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport who will decide on whether the project should go ahead. We intend to submit our application in summer 2018. Prior to the application, we will undertake further public consultation on our detailed design proposals.

More information about the DCO process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website: <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk>

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Explaining the Development Consent Order (DCO) process



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 PR265/16.

Highways England creative job number M160539

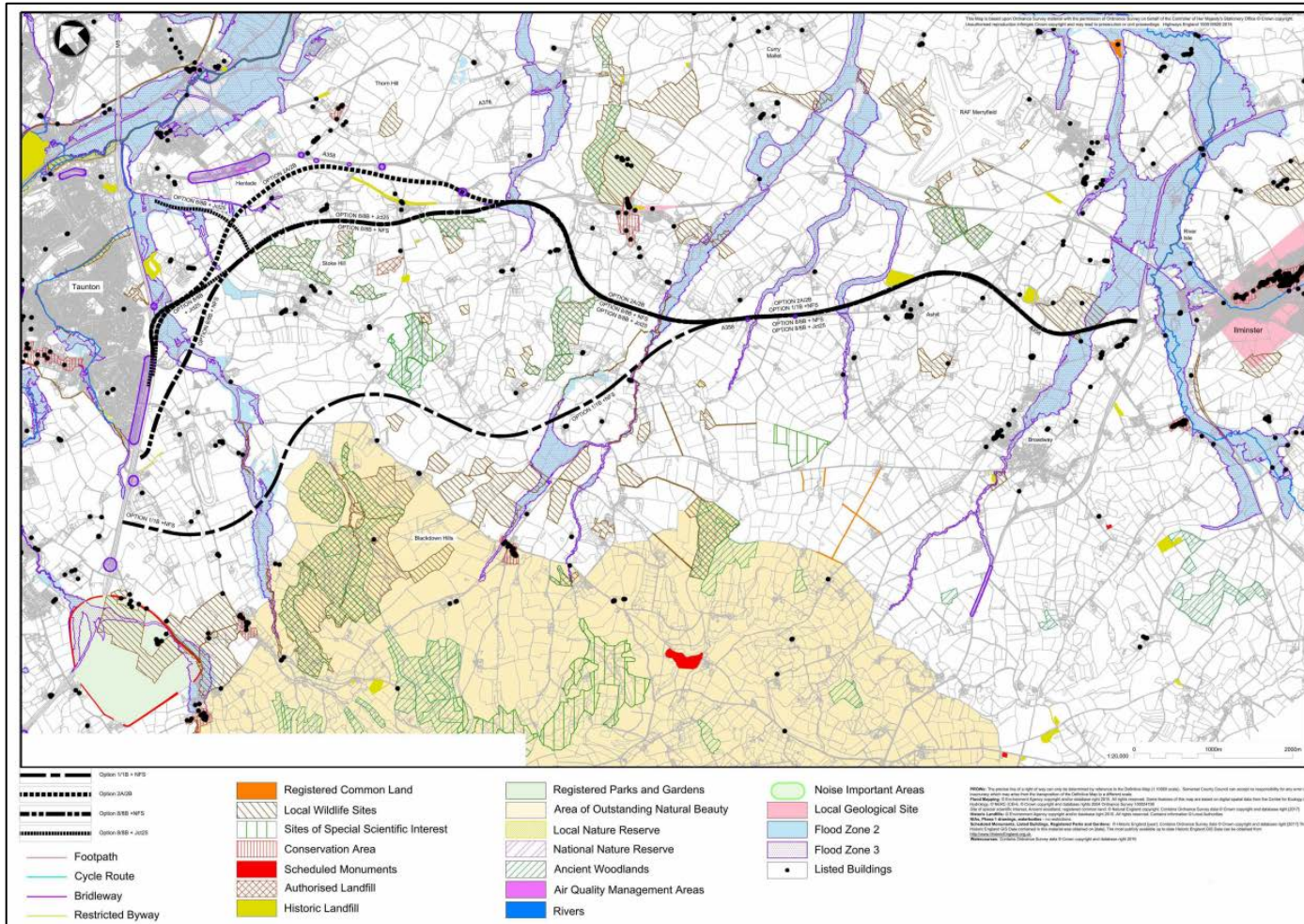
*Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls. These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone. Calls may be recorded or monitored.

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Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ
 Highways England Company Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363



Appendix E: Environmental constraints plan



Appendix F: Statutory stakeholder letter



Our ref: SingleOptionConsultation2017

[Insert details]

David Stock
Project Manager
2/07K Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6HA

Enquiries: 0300 123 5000

24 March 2017

[Insert Sir/Madame]

A358 Taunton to Southfields Scheme
Public consultation from Tuesday 28 March until Saturday 20 May 2017

The A303/A358 corridor is a vital connection between the south west and London and the south east. The A358 between Taunton and Southfields is a mix of dual and single carriageway. This section acts as a bottleneck for users, causing congestion and uncertain journey times. Highways England has been working on proposals to improve nearly 10 miles of road with a dual carriageway link between the M5 at Taunton and the A303 at Southfields Roundabout.

The scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and forms part of a programme of planned improvements to the A303/A358 corridor. The scheme aims to relieve congestion, provide reliable journey times, unlock economic growth and improve safety whilst protecting the environment.

Following a detailed technical assessment process we have shortlisted a single route option and would welcome your views on the proposal before a preferred route selection is made later this year.

Event invitation
You are invited to attend a special preview event to view the proposed route option proposal. Opening at 6.30pm, we will give a brief introduction to the scheme at 7.00pm. The project team will be available to talk to throughout the event.

Date	Venue	Time
Tuesday 28 March 2017	Museum of Somerset (Great Hall), Taunton Castle, Castle Green, Taunton, TA1 4AA	6.30pm to 8.30pm, event welcome at 7.00pm

Please confirm your attendance by emailing us at A358TauntontoSouthfieldsDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk. If you are unable to attend the event above, you can still participate in the public consultation in the following ways:

View the proposed single route option online
All consultation information will be available on our scheme webpage from Tuesday 28 March 2017 including a brochure with a summary of the proposed single route option, event

information boards and a link to the consultation questionnaire. For more information, go to: www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields

Attend a public information event

Meet the project team and view the proposed route option at the following events:

Date	Venue	Time
Friday 7 April 2017	Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Village Rd, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton, TA3 6SG	10.00am to 6.00pm
Saturday 8 April 2017	Taunton Racecourse (Owners and Trainers Paddock Stand), Orchard Portman, Taunton, TA3 7BL	10.00am to 6.00pm
Monday 10 April 2017	Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Blackdown Suite), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA	12.00 noon to 8.00pm
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Monday 8 May 2017	Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Blackdown Suite), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA	10.00am to 5.00pm

Visit a public information point

Consultation materials will be available to view from Tuesday 28 March until Saturday 20 May 2017 during normal opening hours at the following places:

Public Information Points	
Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Rd, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE	Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3XZ
Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY	South Somerset District Council, Bampton Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2HT
South Petherton Library, St. James Street, South Petherton, Somerset, TA13 5BS	Martock Library, Martock Shopping Centre, Martock, Somerset, TA12 6DL
Ilminster Meeting House & Arts Centre, East Street, Ilminster, TA19 0AN	Henlade Post Office, Henlade , Taunton, TA3 5DH

Have your say

Please complete a short questionnaire to let us know what you think of the proposal.

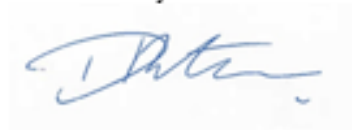
You can use one of the following methods to contact us and/or respond to the consultation:

- Complete the questionnaire online at: www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields
- Email: A358TauntontoSouthfieldsDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Call: 0300 123 5000 (9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)
- Post all responses to: Freepost Consultation FPN 4016
- Write to us at: A358 Taunton to Southfields Scheme, Project Team, Highways England, 2/07k Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6HA

The deadline for responses is 11.59pm on Saturday 20 May 2017.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Stock', is centered within a light grey rectangular box.

David Stock
Major Projects South West
Email: A358TauntontoSouthfieldsDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk
Tel: 0300 123 5000

Appendix G: Local community stakeholder letter



Our ref: SingleOptionConsultation2017

David Stock
2/07K Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6HA

Enquiries: 0300 123 5000

March 2017

Dear Occupier,

A358 Taunton to Southfields Scheme
Public consultation from Tuesday 28 March until Saturday 20 May 2017

The A303/A358 corridor is a vital connection between the south west and London and the south east. The A358 between Taunton and Southfields is a mix of dual and single carriageway. This section acts as a bottleneck for users, causing congestion and uncertain journey times. Highways England has been working on proposals to improve nearly 10 miles of road with a dual carriageway link between the M5 at Taunton and the A303 at Southfields Roundabout.

The scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and forms part of a programme of planned improvements to the A303/A358 corridor. The scheme aims to relieve congestion, provide reliable journey times, unlock economic growth and improve safety whilst protecting the environment.

Following a detailed technical assessment process we have shortlisted a single route option and would welcome your views on the proposal before a preferred route selection is made later this year.

How to get involved and respond to the consultation

View the proposed single route option online

All consultation information will be available on our scheme webpage from Tuesday 28 March 2017 including a brochure with a summary of the proposed single route option, event information boards and a link to the consultation questionnaire. For more information, go to: www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields

Attend a public information event

Meet the project team and view the proposed route option at the following events:

Date	Venue	Time
Friday 7 April 2017	Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Village Rd, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton TA3 6SG,	10.00am to 8.00pm
Saturday 8 April 2017	Taunton Racecourse (Owners and Trainers Paddock Stand), Orchard Portman, Taunton, TA3 7BL	10.00am to 8.00pm

Monday 10 April 2017	Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Blackdown Suite), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA	12.00 noon to 8.00pm
Tuesday 11 April 2017	Monks Yard (Conference Room), Horton Cross Farm, Horton Cross, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9PT	12.00 noon to 8.00pm
Monday 8 May 2017	Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Blackdown Suite), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA	10.00am to 5.00pm

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Ilminster Meeting House & Arts Centre, East Street, Ilminster, TA19 0AN	Henlade Post Office, Henlade, Taunton, TA3 5DH

Have your say

Please complete a short questionnaire to let us know what you think of the proposal.

You can use one of the following methods to contact us and/or respond to the consultation:

- Complete the questionnaire online at: www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields
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The deadline for responses is 11.59pm on Saturday 20 May 2017.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully



David Stock
Major Projects South West
Email: A358TauntontoSouthfieldsDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk
Tel: 0300 123 5000

Appendix H: Landholder stakeholder letter



Our ref: SingleOptionConsultation2017

[Insert details]

David Stock
Project Manager
2/07K Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6HA

Enquiries: 0300 123 5000

24 March 2017

[insert name]

A358 Taunton to Southfields Scheme Public consultation from Tuesday 28 March until Saturday 20 May 2017

The A303/A358 corridor is a vital connection between the south west and London and the south east. The A358 between Taunton and Southfields is a mix of dual and single carriageway. This section acts as a bottleneck for users, causing congestion and uncertain journey times. Highways England has been working on proposals to improve nearly 10 miles of road with a dual carriageway link between the M5 at Taunton and the A303 at Southfields Roundabout.

The scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and forms part of a programme of planned improvements to the A303/A358 corridor. The scheme aims to relieve congestion, provide reliable journey times, unlock economic growth and improve safety whilst protecting the environment. Following a detailed technical assessment process we have shortlisted a single route option and would welcome your views on the proposal before a preferred route selection is made later this year.

Event invitation

From our enquiries you have been identified as having an interest in land or property located in the vicinity of the proposed route option. You are invited to attend a special land interest event where you can talk to a member of our team. To arrange an appointment, please contact us by telephone on 0300 470 6204 or by email at: A358TauntontoSouthfieldsDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk and inform us of your preferred date and time.

Date	Venue	Time – Appointment only
Thursday 30 March 2017	Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Village Road, Hatch Beauchamp, Somerset, TA3 8SG	11.00am to 8.00pm
Friday 31 March 2017	The Wyvern Club, Mountfields Rd, Taunton, TA1 3BJ	11.00am to 8.00pm
Monday 3 April 2017	Monks Yard (Conference Room), Horton Cross Farm, Horton Cross, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9PT	11.00am to 8.00pm
Tuesday 4 April 2017	Holiday Inn Taunton M5 J25 (Priority suite 3 and 4), Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA	11.00am to 8.00pm

If you are unable to attend, we are also holding several public information events which you are welcome to attend. You can participate in the public consultation in the following ways:

View the proposed single route option online

All consultation information will be available on our scheme webpage from Tuesday 28 March 2017 including a brochure with a summary of the proposed single route option, event information boards and a link to the consultation questionnaire. For more information, go to: www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields

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Have your say

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We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

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David Stock
Major Projects South West
Email: A358TauntontoSouthfieldsDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk
Tel: 0300 123 5000

Appendix I: Key stakeholder list

Contact Name	Title	Address
Rt Hon Chris Grayling	Secretary of State for Transport	Department for Transport Great Minster House 33 Horseferry Road London SW1P 4DR
Marcus Fysh MP Rebecca Pow MP	Local MPs	House of Commons London SW1A 0AA
Avon & Somerset Constabulary Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Taunton & Somerset NHS Foundation Trust	Emergency services	
Highways England	Operations Directorate	Temple Quay House Bristol BS1 6HA
Environment Agency	Planning Specialist	Environment Agency Rivers House East Quay Bridgwater Somerset TA6 4Y8
Natural England	Inspector of Ancient Monuments	Historic England, 29 Queen Square Bristol BS1 4ND
The National Trust	Project Officer (South West Infrastructure)	Place Farm Courtyard Court Street Tisbury Salisbury Wiltshire SP3 6LW
Natural England	Somerset, Avon and Wiltshire Sustainable Development Team	Natural England Guildbourne House Chatsworth Road Worthing BN11 1LD

Contact Name	Title	Address
South Somerset District Council	Leader, Deputy Leader, Planning Policy Team Leader, Senior Planning Officer, Assistant Director – Economy, Press Officer, Equalities Officer, Policy Planner, Conservation Officer, Landscape Architect, Ecologist	Brompton Way Yeovil BA20 2HT
Somerset County Council	Strategic Commissioning Manager – Highways and Transport, Commissioning Manager - Highways and Transport, Team Manager – Engineering, Cabinet Manager for Highways, Service Manager – Planning Policy, Service Manager – Communications Manager	Somerset County Council County Hall Taunton Somerset TA1 4DY
South West Heritage	County Archaeologist	Somerset Heritage Centre Brunel Way Taunton TA2 6SF

Appendix J: Public consultation questionnaire feedback logs

The public consultation questionnaire feedback responses have been compiled into the log below. The responses have been grouped into themes as highlighted in Section 5.3 of the report.

Highways England response to public feedback

Highways England would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the consultation and submitted a consultation response. The consultation has highlighted a variety of views about the scheme these have been summarised in Section 5.3. Having carefully considered the feedback received, Highways England has concluded that, before selecting a preferred route, it would be beneficial to reconsult on its scheme proposals, with more options for connecting with the M5. The purpose of this second period non-statutory consultation will be to secure feedback that can inform the decision-making on the choice of preferred route for the scheme.

Theme Area – Junctions proposals	Public Feedback
Junction A	If the development from jct A to jct B is to go ahead surely it makes sense to create another route into Taunton from the new proposed motorway junction. Thus decreasing the volume of traffic through Henlade significantly and make the disruption through the countryside more acceptable.
Junction A	[Supportive of the proposed Junction A] Provided that traffic from Ilminster is not still tempted to use Henlade as a shorter route north to the motorway but that should be avoided by the faster link road.
Junction A	Think there is more benefit from a Junction 24A. To benefit us, this needs to provide access to and from Taunton. At least needs a separate lane from J25A to J25.
Junction A	There should be a direct link road onto the new dual carriageway from the proposed new business park at Henlade. This would solve the problem of the predicted extra 9,000 vehicles a day having to go through Henlade.
Junction A	This expensive proposal would not seem to relieve the majority of traffic currently passing through Henlade as there is no provision for access to Taunton from J25A.
Junction A	It will work only if the current junction off the M5 is closed to the M5 forcing traffic onto the new expressway. Traffic lights will still be needed to help with the flow of traffic on and off the new expressway.
Junction A	Access from the B3170 - Racecourse road should be considered.

Theme Area – Junctions proposals	Public Feedback
Junction A	There isn't room to put a junction at the proposed location. It is also futile as you are prepared to spend our money on a road that only 11% of motorists will use off peak holidays and 0% during school holidays as the M5 is grid locked - useless.
Junction A	Too near to developments and houses in that area.
Junction A	I Think the junction should be at Walford Cross making it possible to use the A358 as the main route into Taunton.
Junction A	Traffic also needs to be able to access Taunton centre from this junction or at least access new employment site or they have to get off at junction 25 which is already over capacity.
Junction A	Surely all Taunton traffic and motorway traffic going north to Bristol will still use the old road through Henlade as it is the most direct route. How can you prevent this? This being the case, there will still be congestion in the Henlade area.
Junction A	This proposed roundabout is far too close to the current Junction 25. This stretch of the M5 already has above average accident and congestion levels so it is highly likely that there will be stationary traffic on the northbound M5 motorway between the proposed new roundabout and Junction 25 during busy periods and especially during the summer months.
Junction A	The current proposed location will have a detrimental effect on our development site at Killams, Taunton. The proposed 2 bridge junction is likely to require land that has planning for residential development. The impact of the raised junction is likely to have a detrimental effect on house sales and quality of the enjoyment of these dwellings and also the existing neighbouring homes.
Junction A	The proposed spur to JA at Shoreditch will not achieve anything and will do nothing for Henlade. All non-Taunton traffic needs to be diverted OUT of Henlade ideally a spur leaving A358 at Thornfalcon and going NORTH between Ruishton and Creech St Michael joining M5 near Walford Cross with full access from Taunton, Bridgwater and Glastonbury.
Junction A	I don't believe there is room for a junction at this point. There definitely is not room for slip roads on & off the M5 between the existing Killams Avenue bridge and the first of the houses.
Junction A	We feel that the new junction is not necessary and a waste of money as most people are either commuting to Taunton or Bristol and so are unlikely to use the new junction.
Junction A	At the public consultations held by Highways England there was no detail of its siting but the proposed 'Junction A' appears to be extremely close to the residential area of Killams and would bring increased noise and pollution.
Junction B	This is not suitable for all the villages as the lanes would not be able to cope with the increase in traffic. Also the disturbance through villages from people cutting through. It isn't acceptable being the only way to access the opposite side of the A358.

Theme Area – Junctions proposals	Public Feedback
Junction B	To reduce the number of current junctions joining the new proposed A358 down to 2 will create a number of disruptions. Excess traffic on country lanes, HGV using sat navs on very narrow lanes no way off passing, horse riders, cyclists, walkers, all vulnerable road uses on county lanes. ALL increase the risk of public safety.
Junction B	Would be better if it linked better with Langport road. Concerned about how it improves the Henlade situation, as many drivers at most times of the day may stay on the old A358 rather than take the detour of the new road.
Junction B	This seems a strange place - given that Ilton, Horton & Broadway can be serviced by a slightly altered Junction c.
Junction B	You will simply bottle neck the traffic on the M5 - this will not relieve congestion. you need to look at the A303 before you do this. There are several places along the A303 that clog up, this road will not help the rat run to the South West.
Junction B	This creates the distinct possibility of increasing "rat runs" on country lanes which are wholly unsuitable save for local light traffic. The moment there is a hold up, be it an accident, road works or congestion traffic taking to the side roads will cause chaos.
Junction B	This junction seems to be in the wrong place. It should be at the Thornfalcon traffic lights area where it would have less impact as this is already a large area affected by the road. Also at the West Hatch location the scheme is out of proportion with traffic on 2 levels and would have a huge impact on the countryside in this area.
Junction B	There should be more junctions I believe as there are a lot of outlying villages who join the A358 at many different points. Undue pressure may occur at these junctions in peak periods. It may be the case that traffic traveling north on M5 from Ilminster end, may prefer the old junction J25, as traffic will be lighter, so access still needed. I may do this, but will reserve judgement as I'm sure the new expressway will be quicker despite being further south than J25.
Junction B	I would have preferred a roundabout, maybe using the existing Hatch Beauchamp junction, but I can understand the wish to use slip roads in order to maintain the flow of traffic on the new road.
Junction B	It depends exactly where the junction is proposed to be. I cannot tell from the basic maps. At present getting onto the A358 from Hatch Beauchamp, you are taking your life in your hands during heavy congestion.
Junction B	It might make sense if this junction could be moved slightly north to coincide with the current junction leading to Hatch Beauchamp. The current junction onto the A358 accessing/exiting Hatch Beauchamp is very unsatisfactory. If the junction can't be moved north then it would be very helpful if the proposed arrangement could be tweaked to achieve direct access to the roundabout for the road leading to/from Hatch Beauchamp by a small amount of re-routing of this road.
Junction B	Junction B should be located near the A378, as in option 2A/2B, so traffic could use this new stretch of road heading west.
Junction B	You have to have access onto existing A358 because 80% of traffic on the A358 is going into Taunton or North bound on M5.

Theme Area – Junctions proposals	Public Feedback
Junction B	The new road is proposed to be an expressway therefore its purpose is provide the quickest route possible from West Hatch to Junction 25A. Slip roads would facilitate this, however the impact on the scouts camp seems to be at a cost for this proposed location of choice.
Junction B	As only 11% of the traffic is going in a southerly direction, I believe it is highly likely that ongoing traffic would continue to take the existing A358, as would the northbound traffic, rather than take a substantial detour via the proposed junction 25a/M5 to head north. In the frequent events of the A358 being jammed, vehicles seeking a detour would attempt to travel via narrow, single track lanes that surround it. Many of which are in sole of taking HGV's
Junction B	To provide relief to Henlade there needs to be discouragement to traffic from using the A358 between this junction + M5 (J25). These include signage, traffic lights + traffic calming in Henlade.
Junction B	I understand this part of the proposal except why would traffic wanting to go north want to travel much further to join the motorway at a new junction further south? Most traffic wants to go north or towards Taunton and will continue using the existing route thereby minimising any benefit to Henlade. Traffic census data needed.
Junction C	There is not enough information - where do slip roads go? What do they link to? Who are they intended to benefit?
Junction C	This will increase the traffic and congestion through the side roads and country lanes and although accidents on the A358 may decrease they will increase through additional road traffic on lanes not built to handle the additional traffic.
Junction C	This is the most ludicrous part of the whole scheme. Park Barn Lane is a single track road which to the east of the A358 is a no through road with less than 10 houses.
Junction C	Junction C should be to the west of ashill to reduce the impact on the village, there is no benefit it being to the east
Junction C	Whilst this proposed junction is fine for people living at Park Barn/Ashill and there are not many - people living in Broadway, Horton, Ilton, Isle Abbotts, etc. etc are going to be very badly affected. They will either have to drive down to Southfields, or up to Ashill - to join the new road - adding at least 2 miles and several minutes to every single journey. This is an extremely retrograde step.
Junction C	The close proximity of junction B to junction C would be bound to extremely adversely affect the properties alongside the present A358. At the last consultation I attended, it was proposed to site an over-bridge adjacent to Capland Lane. This would seem to be at odds with junctions B and C
Junction C	It has to be somewhere. My question is how do I travel from Hatch Beauchamp to the new junction? OK if I'm travelling to Ilminster, but what if I am travelling to Taunton. Presumably I use Meare Green though to the Longport Rd? - there will be increased traffic though this quiet village!
Junction C	Traffic crossing from Ilton/Ashill turnoff is already a dangerous hazard. Consideration should be given to this crossing.

Theme Area – Junctions proposals	Public Feedback
Junction C	Our concern is that commuting traffic from Taunton, Hatch Beauchamp via Staple Fitzpaine and Bickenhall will pass through Ashill village at peak times in the day. Particularly when school children are being transported to and from Ashill School.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	Significantly under-sized for the traffic volume. Suggest Junction 'C' should be further away from 'D' - nearer to Stewley to avoid 'C' becoming a 'local rat run' to avoid 'D' with very negative consequences on local road traffic.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	Seeing as Southfield roundabout already exists, it cannot be a proposed junction. If by dualling the A358 traffic increases it will be to the detriment of locals trying to join from the Ilminster and Chard roads.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	The current roundabout is too small to accommodate the current speed limit and traffic BUT a dual A358 into a single A303 would in my opinion cause more disruption than the current layout. A dual A303 with a slip road from the A358 would be more practical and cost effective.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	Pointless unless the Ilminster bypass is addressed too!
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	I strongly disagree that the proposal meets the scheme objectives at Southfields Roundabout. The objectives would be far better met by joining the A358 and the A303 directly (thus taking the existing Southfields Roundabout off-line) and introducing a new grade-separated junction immediately north of the existing roundabout with a connecting link to it. Elsewhere I broadly agree that the scheme proposals go quite some way to meet the objectives.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	If there was a connection road before Junction D straight to the 303 that would ease much congestion freeing up the roundabout.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	Get rid of Southfields roundabout for the traffic coming from Taunton to A358, slide them off earlier, it is a very bad roundabout for big Lorries, so many accidents.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	How will this clear + speed up traffic on the road in front of the nursing home towards Horton
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	The roundabout needs to be enlarged.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	There is no consideration for local traffic and commerce. There is no consideration for traffic flows via the A358 to Chard from Southfields roundabout. In the summer this is a busy route to the South coast i.e. Lyme Regis & often gridlocked.

Theme Area – Junctions proposals	Public Feedback
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	I am worried about this. The roundabout is like a race track and many accidents happen at the moment. I believe that substantial improvements need to be made to it for safeties sake. Currently there are no signs informing traffic which lanes to use for which exits and people are all over the place. It is essential that signage is used a good distance from the roundabout to ensure that lorries and cars are in the correct lanes. This will be the most important part of the improvements. It is diabolical at the moment with traffic using any lane because there are no signs, only marking on the road itself 20 metres from the junctions.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	The aim of the scheme is to improve traffic flow between the A303 Ilminster Bypass and the A358 to Taunton. Having a roundabout here, albeit an improved one, will NOT do this. There are 5 roads joining here; A358 from Taunton, A358 from Chard, A303 from Honiton, Ilminster Road, A303 Ilminster Bypass. All can have large numbers of vehicles at the same time causing lengthy queues. The only solution would be a grade separated junction along free flow between the Ilminster Bypass and the A358 Taunton Road. Other traffic would use the roundabout. Southfields roundabout is also an accident black spot.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	Upgrading the roundabout will have little benefit over the existing roundabout as the A303 (east) cannot accommodate an increase in traffic much of the time. Dualling the southern section of the A358 will have very limited benefit as traffic is constrained by the Southfields roundabout. There will just be 2 lines of queued traffic rather than one. Any real benefit will be deferred until the Southfields roundabout is converted into a grade separated interchange or free flowing links are provided to the A303 East, just as was proposed for the majority of early A358 options prior to value engineering.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	I believe this current junction is completely fit for service. For that matter, the whole stretch of road under consideration is non-essential. It is work for works sake. I do not believe the current government should be sanctioning needless and extraordinarily expensive projects at the detriment of thousands of people.
Junction D - Southfields Roundabout	I would like to see slip roads towards Yeovil rather than have to queue at a roundabout.

Theme Area – Alternative routes	Public Feedback
Alternative routes	Road into Taunton should be nearer Henlade. Even if demolition and compensation for a few houses was required. Should go behind caravan site and Arundel cottages.
Alternative routes	My understanding from the public event attended is that there is potential to move the road 100m in either direction from these shown on the plan. The proposed road is passing very close to Presidents Court and it would reduce the impact if it could be moved 100m further back, away from Presidents Court and Dairy farm.
Alternative routes	The proposed scheme fails to meet the stated objectives in terms of value for money, safety and environmental impact. Option 2A/2B is far better in every respect based on the technical report findings and with regard to local business development.
Alternative routes	Looking at a map of the local area I believe that a completely new route should be used. There is an existing old railway line. I feel sure that this would affect fewer local properties along the route and would cost far less money than the proposed route.
Alternative routes	Making a connection from the Heron Gate roundabout to Blackbrook commercial area would reduce the pressure on the Henlade/M5 roundabout.
Alternative routes	I feel strongly that managing & improving existing routes would make a more cost efficient benefit to the flow of traffic in the area.
Alternative routes	Please come back to us with 3 options as laid out in a recent Parish Council meeting at Stoke St Mary village hall.
Alternative routes	SCRAP THE PROPOSED ROUTE AND DEVELOP 2A/2B.
Alternative routes	One SCHEME is NOT ENOUGH - it needs to be seen in the wider context.
Alternative routes	This is the worst of all options assessed in terms of environmental impact, safety and value for money. Option 2A/2B with links to the current junction 25 is clearly better from virtually every respect. Properly designed link roads within this option can provide the additional resilience Highways England appear to want to relieve congestion around Henlade, reduce the impact on the environment, and promote economic development at the new Nexus business development.
Alternative routes	Other traffic routes are not considered well ... what traffic survey and modelling works have been carried out ... how have these been tested. Simple re-phasing of the traffic lights around this junction would have a large impact but no testing of such phasing has been observed. Improvements can be made here!
Alternative routes	Of the 4 options in the Technical Appraisal Report, the preferred option, option 8/8B + NFS provides: 1) benefit to cost ratio of 1.54, the lowest BCR of the 4 options. 2) increase in accidents and noise, compared to a reduction were any of the other 3 options to be used, when set against doing nothing at all.3) only 48% of the carrying capacity of the highest option after 15 years. All because it costs the least amount to build initially. The option therefore represents an irresponsible use of taxpayers money.

Theme Area – Alternative routes	Public Feedback
Alternative routes	This scheme does not require the objectives, according to your own Technical Appraisal Report there will be an increase in accidents of £0.3m and noise increase of £0.8m. It also has the lowest benefit to cost ratio of all the schemes. There would also only be an 11% decrease in the traffic flow through Henlade.
Alternative routes	An Highways England representative at the meeting at the Wyvern on 27th June said that there was no access to junction 25 of the M5 because this junction was not suitable for increased traffic. However, in the Technical Appraisal Report, it states that an operational assessment of Junction 25 has been carried out for the options both without a Junction 25 link (Option 8/8B+NFS) and with (Option 2A/2B and Option 8/8B+Jn25). The analysis was undertaken with LINSIG for the linked signal junction improvement proposed by Somerset County Council with forecast peak period traffic flows for the design year 2038. This showed that with the junction improvement the degree of saturation would be around 85% in both the AM and PM peak periods either with OR without the Jn25 link so I do not understand why the routes that link to this junction have been ruled out.
Alternative routes	According to the Technical Appraisal Report, Option 2A/2B would use the existing road corridor as much as possible and thus minimise new or increased environmental impact to properties that are remote from the existing road. It would include the potential to re-use the existing carriageway construction, subject to condition surveys and geometric design development. This option is likely to be the optimum solution with respect to impact on local side roads. Furthermore, because it most closely follows the existing route it also offers the greatest potential for remedying severance experienced by communities north and south of the existing A358 as a result of historical upgrades and increases in traffic volumes. The Option 2A/2B scheme will also attract the most traffic to the new A358.
Alternative routes	My preferred route would be of the existing dual carriageway near Station House on the A358 East of Ruishton and West of Creech St Michael to Langaller. The route goes through less sensitive countryside It would also help to deal with the Traffic from the West which as we all are aware produced traffic hold up for several hours morning and evening at Junction 25 on the M5 to make Traffic coming from the East use the new junction at Langaller traffic calming methods would be introduced on the existing A358.
Alternative routes	The obvious solution is to improve the existing road as in Figure 6.5: A358 Taunton to Ilminster network – with option 2A/2B. This would be cheaper (much less civil engineering) far less disruptive to bird nesting areas and farmland and actually link in with the new proposed business park
Alternative routes	It is NOT the route required by the District Council, requested by the County Council or desired by the population of the areas which will be forever changed by this scheme.

Theme Area – Highways design	Public Feedback
Non-motorised Users	As a horse rider, our hacking has already been greatly reduced by the A358 being so busy. Any ways to ensure riding routes are put into the scheme would be greatly appreciated.
Non-motorised Users	A lot more traffic will be pushed onto single track small lanes as people try to take short cuts to the junctions THIS MUST NOT HAPPEN - it will be bad for walkers, horses and cyclists, this must be taken into consideration when making the final decision.
Non-motorised Users	I would like to see much more mention made about pedestrian and cyclist opportunities to safely use the new road and new access roads / bridges, and about enhancements to local roads to safely accommodate. Currently the provision is diabolical, with the A358 being highly unsafe and links between communities almost impossible without use of a car. The new road has the potential to provide improvements in this area - currently we can't see these articulated, which is a shame. We would like to see far more about this in the next version of the plans.
Non-motorised Users	There are several long distance walking, cycling and bridle paths. There is no consideration for non-vehicular traffic and continued use of the existing crossing points/paths.
Non-motorised Users	There are a number of footpaths linking the villages north and south of the A358. At present access is via stiles onto the road. Crossing the road is possible but possibly dangerous. Under the new scheme, footbridges will be necessary.
Non-motorised Users	Please include dedicated cycle routes that will help reduce local traffic and enable people to cycle between Taunton and Ilminster safely, avoiding main roads.
Non-motorised Users	There is no mention of any provision for cyclists, pedestrians etc. and it seems that this has not been considered, even though it is stated as a being a key consideration for the scheme!
Flooding	I trust that the design will include excellent surface weather drainage. Something which affects the existing junction of the A358 and Broadway road.
Flooding	The roads flood near the bridge at Horton.
Flooding	The proposed route goes across flood plain. How will the extra hard surface drainage be dealt with when the area is already liable to flooding? Will it just be fed into the existing water courses and then to the levels and increase flooding issues there?
Flooding	Our property has well water which is used for external purposes. The construction phase of the project is likely to impact upon the quality of our water supply during this time.
Safety	There is also local primary school at Thurlbear where children walk to school and to the churches in Stoke St Mary, so any increase in traffic will affect them, not to mention the daily commute to and from school. Because it is a rural school 99% of pupils are driven, so any increase in traffic in the area would be detrimental to this and I feel it would increase the likelihood of harm being caused.
Safety	2 junctions so close together on the M5 will give rise to more accidents leading to more congestion leading to more air, noise and light pollution in an already

Theme Area – Highways design	Public Feedback
	existing urban. The safety aspect cannot be emphasised enough in the light of the Grenfell tower scenario.
Safety	Unsafe alignment of junctions.
Safety	You will have a major traffic build up because you will have to cross 2 lanes of traffic to come to Taunton.
Safety	This stretch of the A358 is already an accident blackspot at Ashill. If anything, measures should be looked at to slow traffic/increase safety - not to introduce another hazard with traffic merging.
Safety	The 19th century 'back lanes/rat runs' from West Monkton, Goosenford, Rowford and Cheddon became particularly badly hit, when any incident occurs on the M5 between junctions 24/25 and 26.
Safety	The scheme would simply shift some of the current congestion and pollution problems to another area of Taunton and the single option will actually lead to more casualties and fatalities according to the Appraisal report.
Traffic	There is inadequate information on how the movement of HGV's etc will be accommodated.
Traffic	Supposedly it might relieve congestion by 11% but this is negligible, there will be little effect.
Traffic	I really hope that sensible conversations happen between those planning this scheme and those working on local building projects. The building of the employment land and building the thousands on new homes in Creech St Michael/Monkton Heathfield/West Monkton will create so much additional traffic onto the A358 at Ruishton and Henlade that nobody will be able to get anywhere, especially during all the roadworks which will be involved. None of these vehicles will use your lovely new road in any case.
Traffic	There is no mention of the long term impact on the M5 which already resembles a slow moving car park at peak periods. Is a single primary route to Devon and Cornwall in their best interests? Where is the strategy in having one primary route?
Traffic	The proposed option removes the least traffic. Only 27% of traffic at junction 25 of the M5 goes southbound.
Traffic	The scheme will encourage more traffic adding further congestion.
Outside scope	Could lane 1 and the hard shoulder not be designated "Taunton only" from say 0730 to 0930 from 0.5mils out. This would allow the roundabout lights to be held on red for say an extra 15 seconds. This would increase traffic flow along the 358.
Outside scope	A pedestrian controlled crossing should be put in at Henlade crossroad. Speed should be restricted to 20mph between the motorway and Thornfalcon.
Outside scope	It will not relieve traffic on the Blackbrook and Creech Castle Junction.
Outside scope	I assume you will no longer fund the changes Somerset County Council want between the M5 at Junction 25 and Ruishton lane. The Park and Ride:- no longer needed if you build the bypass of Henlade and a new interchange.

Theme Area – local community considerations	Public Feedback
Impact on community	I feel that these developments should be kept as close as possible to existing roads to minimise the impact on the local community and environment. People along the existing route bought their houses knowing that there was a main road there; people along the new proposed route did not!
Local economy	It will undermine the local Taunton economy.
Local economy	More consideration should be given to integrating Taunton into this road improvement scheme so that it benefits from economic growth because of improved traffic flows. The current proposal seems to isolate Taunton and not include it.
Local economy	The proposal is unlikely to give any economic benefit for Taunton as it bypasses the town with limited connections into existing and planned economic centres (Blackbrook Business park, the new development behind the Park & Ride).
Local economy	This doesn't benefit Taunton, merely opens up the London to Cornwall gateway.
Local economy	The position of this junction makes the proposed road into a bypass for Taunton meaning that it does not support economic growth in the town, one of the objectives of the scheme.
Local roads	During holiday season we think congestion may be worse in the South because of the capacity constraints caused by the Ilminster bypass. We do not feel able to comment on how local journeys will be affected as there is still uncertainty as to route detail. Our particular concerns regard local access to Ilminster at Southfields and to Taunton via Orchard Portman/Shoreditch.
Local roads	There is no clear indication about the Stewley Lodge entrance to Ashill Wind Mill Hill. If there is no exit/entrance planned to the new road. Will this affect business's in this area eg. carwash, square and compass pub?
Local roads	I would strongly object to Killams Avenue linked in the roundabout because even if not publicised would create traffic transfer & chaos on the local roads. Also any road across the Vivary wedge would lead to its entire development
Local roads	A Donyatt bypass. Maintain all the current junctions along the A358 to allow life for residents to continue as it is presently. i.e. the freedom to drive from one village to another without the need for miles of additional travelling.
Local roads	The roundabout does not help local traffic. The traffic through the lanes is not going decrease as people still have to get to junction 25 to use the motorway and some of those lanes are not going to be open as the road will cross them. There seems to have been little or no consideration of local residents in this process.
Local roads	Access to the sewage works at Ashill.
Local roads	We need a bridge to connect us to our village and parish to enable us to get to school and church and the new road. This will be between the car wash and the Stewley and Beeroccombe road, we run a business that requires articulated

Theme Area – local community considerations	Public Feedback
	lorry access for 40 tonne lorries. Our business send milk daily and we haul forage to cattle from the other side of the road.
Local roads	Our farm currently has access to half its land from the Hatch Beauchamp to Battens Green road. The land is divided by a stream and deep goyle. The land close to the goyle lies very wet and accordingly is unsuitable for bridging easily. For us it is important that the proposed link for local traffic from Stewley Cross past Folly Drove continues to the crossroads of Battens Green/Hatch Beauchamp and does NOT end at Capland. This will provide both for our farm traffic and allow local people continued access to the local village of Hatch Beauchamp (with school), the communities to the East and also to Taunton.
Local roads	The roads around our area are also in a poor state and the government is struggling to find the funding to maintain them. With only 3 junctions onto the A358 from the current 18 this will have greater wear a tear and more pot holes which will not be be to be repaired by the lack of local funding.
Local roads	Local traffic will be highly likely to use Windmill Hill Lane instead of travel Wood Road to Ashill Old Road to get to New A358 Junction C.
Local roads	2. Ashill Village must have a speed limit change from 40mph to 30mph
Local roads	3. Ashill village road must have traffic slowing islands installed, as used on other roads in built up areas.
Local roads	Travel time through Henlade and the queuing into Henlade for both west and eastbound traffic will be significantly reduced. Access on to the A358 itself, by local traffic will however be a more lengthy process with the removal of many of the A358 side road junctions and will ADD to journey times.
Local roads	I am principally concerned about the impact the new interchange will have on our parish and the local roads, particularly through the Rapps' community.
Local roads	No thought has been given to the work required on adjacent roads to upgrade them and make them safe.
Local roads	As there will be fewer access and cross-over points of the proposed new road (at the moment the exact number is unspecified) there will be an increase in local traffic using the minor roads which are unsuitable for heavy traffic with few passing places. This will cause delays in travel time and create more 'rat-runs'.
Local roads	The scheme caters for the need of the 'through traffic' which may only use the route infrequently - or even once only (ie. foreign visitors/holiday makers). It absolutely does NOT cater for the DAILY needs of residents along the route - particularly between Southfields roundabout and Hatch Beauchamp/Thornfalcon.
Local roads	Broadway and Ilton junctions are busier than Park Barn Lane. No proposals have been given how traffic using these junctions are to access the A358.
Local roads	I am very doubtful that the proposed scheme will address the volume of traffic going through Henlade on the present A358. Much of that traffic is going into Taunton. If there is a new industrial park being built alongside the M5 that is not going to have an entry/exit on the new link road then this will increase

Theme Area – local community considerations	Public Feedback
	massively the amount of cars on the 358 at Henlade.
Local roads	Speed limits - currently most of the roads have a 60 ie Horton Cross, Rapps - it is dangerous now and would need to be something to be considered in the planning and safety aspect.
Local roads	In the summer the M5 will stop. Local journeys will get worse, the main rat runs on the B roads around the A358 are from Taunton to the A303, given you will not be able to access this road and the lack of by pass around Henlade, outside of holiday times the new road will be largely empty and the B roads will be full of traffic trying to get from Taunton to A303 etc whilst not being able to cross the new road
Local roads	Our regular journeys will not be improved. Your own report says the majority of Henlade traffic goes into or through Taunton or north up the M5. The proposed scheme will not reduce this local congestion.
Local roads	My other concern is the effect on my business which is the petrol service station and convenience shop at the Thornfalcon junction of the A358 and A378. Removing traffic from this road will probably kill off the business. We need serious consultation and discussion on this matter. Will there be any other services allowed to be built on the new route? if so what details?
Local roads	My main concern as a resident along south road is that ultimately traffic will be allowed to come out of Killams estate turn on to Shoreditch road and use it as direct access into Taunton town centre.

Theme Area – Views on consultation	Public Feedback
Audiences	There has been no attempt in the consultation to meet hard to reach groups.
Audiences	Local Authority and other stakeholders have not been consulted on this option and do not back it.
Availability of information	It would be good to have had an aerial view to show exactly where road will go.
Engagement with host local authorities	There clearly needs to be more joined up thinking between yourselves and Somerset County Council Highways.
Level of detail	Both Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council have highlighted in their responses that there is insufficient information to see why other/better route options have been discarded and that Option 2A/2B should have been included.
Level of detail	I need to SEE the plans before commenting on this, a line on a map is not enough information.
Level of detail	Too much about the proposal is at the moment unknown to be able to give a sensible comment. None of the advisers at the consultation were able to tell me which side of the 358 was to be widened or where the slip roads on and off the dual carriageway would be built.
Level of detail	When I went to the consultation today, I was under the illusion that we were going to be given a bit more detail than was available on line. Sorely disappointed and unfair on staff manning the village hall. For next consultation, 3D modelling for clarity, details of construction phases aimed at minimising disruption to Hatch Beauchamp.
Level of detail	At Private and Public meetings HE provided no answer to how Slip Roads could serve communities that are currently linked across the A358 by several intersections. The logical solution of a roundabout here was summarily dismissed.
Level of detail	This questionnaire has nothing on it about children using bikes to get to Heathfield/Richard Huish college etc. Should have in a box in question 18 for school/college
Level of detail	The report later states 'The form that the junction will take is unknown at this stage though the scheme drawing appears to suggest a grade separated gyratory'. How can a proposal be presented for public comment without the correct level of detail?
Level of detail	Visiting the consultation display event it seems no or very little evidence is being shared or known about traffic movements off the A358 then then go through Taunton.
Level of detail	There is not enough detailed information to make a comment on this at this stage!
Materials	The Consultation is misleading. The Consultation May (detail seen at Hatch Beauchamp) location is NOT PARK BARN LANE??
Materials	A spot on the map. doesn't help decide this question.
Materials	I hope there will be an opportunity to view proposals regarding access over/under the dual carriageway.

Theme Area – Views on consultation	Public Feedback
Materials	ONLINE FORM This online form doesn't allow extra comments or choice of more than one option for some questions 9 onwards (even when asked for). For instance I use the A358 4 or 5 times a week but that option is not listed or space allowed to expand. Likewise my use is a mix of work and personal but you can't choose both. Also whilst I don't live along the A458 I live 1 mile from it. Also Q 14 is ambiguous (how concerned are you with the current arrangements?) I assume it means the current A358? Poorly worded
Scope	I would like to be fully reassured that the public consultation is not just a formality. Is this scheme happening regardless of what views you collect?
Scope	Due to the unfortunate events at Grenfell tower, I am sure that you are all aware of the anger and frustration of local communities when large organisations choose to override local people's concerns, health and wellbeing and go for options that look good on paper.
Scope	As your failure to offer more than a single proposal for consultation is an abuse of the consultation process I refuse to be drawn into detail design considerations. I have a right and you have a duty to consult in a proper manner and the approach taken to this project is disgusting.
Scope	This scheme does not satisfy the needs of the County council, district council, affected parishes or Taunton's population. I believe this consultation has proved beyond doubt that this scheme should be discarded, until such time as sufficient funds are available to provide the declared objectives and meets the needs of the county it will travel through.
Scope	Also I feel that the government will be funding so much money into this scheme which some people will agree with, some won't, whereas the money could go to the NHS, saving lives which everyone will agree with.
Timing	The hiatus in the consultation process makes me question if all local residents are aware that the opportunity to comment continues.
Timing	The consultation is illegal since its timings is against regulations and there is only one (poor) option on offer.
Timing	The project had been poorly handled by Highways England purdah periods and initially neglecting to include Stoke St Mary in a separate consultation. Even when you finally came you had no microphones so people couldn't hear and pointer for you powerpoint. Very poor!

Theme Area – Environmental considerations	Public Feedback
Air quality	It is a preposterous scheme - look at your own report. An option that increases accidents has the lowest economic benefit has the highest dis-benefit to the environment and increases greenhouse gases should have been thrown out immediately as useless.
Air quality	No connection to Nexus Industrial Estate making air pollution greater as lorries will still be using old A358 and cars to the park and ride.
Air quality	Local automated clean air charges to diesel lorries to help mitigate pollution damage
Air quality	<p>Don't be influenced by the NIMBY community, do what is best for the next 20 years.</p> <p>You need update your projections to include changes in technology, and it is all for the good, i.e.:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Automated vehicles (especially lorries) "Driverless cars could initially lead to longer delays on the UK's major roads, according to a government report." http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38533517 2. Battery operated vehicles (zero pollution) https://electrek.co/2017/04/13/tesla-semi-all-electric-truck-september-elon-musk/
Air quality	My son cycles into school, he will be needing to cycle under the proposed road. I am not happy about the extra air pollution he will be exposed to.
Air quality	The Greenhouse Gas appraisal has indicated that the 4 options are predicted to increase greenhouse gas emissions. The net present value of the change in CO2 emissions over the 60-year appraisal period from the scheme for each of the options was presented, with a detrimental impact expected for all options. However, Option 8/8B + NFS has a larger impact of -£21,790,787 compared to Option 2A/2B which is -£18,969,025. Again, I do not understand why route 8+NFS has been chosen.
Air quality	1. The bypass is far too close to a community asset, the ancient woodland at the scout camp at Huish woods. This vital local asset is used by thousands of children each year. Increased noise pollution and a reduction in air quality will affect all including the youngest in our community. Suggested Solution:- The road should be moved further away from the woods.
Air quality	I live very near to the proposed new road. Just to add to this, we have recently had our first daughter who is now 7 months old. It concerns us greatly that air pollution may contribute to air quality problems that could then lead to breathing issues e.g. Asthma.
Countryside	The expressway will result in the separation of Stoke Lane from the village of Stoke St Mary. The Scout Camp at West Hatch has thousands of scouts visiting the site each year. Building a road so close to this site goes against the entire ethos of the scouting movement, which is providing children with access to the natural environment.

Theme Area – Environmental considerations	Public Feedback
Cultural heritage	All options present the potential for large adverse effects on unknown archaeological buried remains. Option 1/1B+NFS, Option 8/8B + NFS and Option 8/8B + Jct25 have majority offline alignments, in which proposed construction would extend through current rural areas with known archaeological assets, and areas of high archaeological potential. Option 2A/2B has a majority online alignment, with only the most northern extent as a proposed additional offline route, already located within an urbanised area. I do not understand why a route would be chosen when there are going to be large adverse effects to the area when another route has far fewer adverse effects.
Landscape	The proposed route is on the edge of the Blackdown Hills AONB.
Landscape	this road development would alter the area further and I believe to an unacceptable level. We need to retain the countryside around West Hatch and its is tragic development to plough a dual carriageway through it. We are turning this area of Somerset form rural countryside to suburb.
Landscape	It is very disappointing that is is going to go through prime Agricultural land and Beautiful countryside.
Landscape	As well as obvious concern about noise and pollution I would also like the elevation of the road around Stoke Hill to be kept as low as possible to lessen the visual impact (this could easily be achieved if the alignment of the road was moved very slightly Northwards moving it further down the slope of the hill), the road to be screened with native trees helping to create a wildlife corridor and for all existing roads and paths across the route to be maintained.
Landscape	The route is on the edge of the Vivary green wedge, one of 3 green wedges that have been identified as being protected from development. This route directly contravenes the Council plans for Taunton and in doing so will open up the area for further development, destroying beautiful countryside in the process.
Landscape	this will destroy 2 x ancient woodland devastating impact on ecological and environmental factors
Landscape	There have been other routes looked and with a lower impact on virgin country side, lower pollution & accident rates and I urge that these are considered further due to the lower impact on the area and communities locally.
Landscape	Furthermore, Huish Woods will be adversely affected and the high-quality scout camp will be largely destroyed.
Lighting	We hope all possible measures will be taken to quieten what will become a busier road. We do not want to see an increase in light pollution. Indeed the removal of street-lighting on downgraded roads by Stewley Cross and from Mattocks Tree Hill to Henlade would help to enhance the local rural environment.
Noise	I am particularly concerned about noise pollution so hopefully adequate barriers of trees and banks will be in the design of the scheme.

Theme Area – Environmental considerations	Public Feedback
Noise	It looks as if my house will be affected by noise. If that is the case why haven't you contacted me and informed me what this is likely to be and also whether there will be access to free noise reduction products for my house? In addition to the noise what kind of increased pollution am I likely to experience if this scheme goes ahead? I have no comments about journeys because I don't use a car so this will have no benefit for me whatsoever. It might reduce my house price, or make it very difficult to sell, if there is going to be an increase noise and pollution. If so what compensation is available to me?
Noise	[ADDRESS REDACTED] and my brother purchased the field behind adding my property- this was done as I have sheep that going to graze in there, which if this goes ahead then won't be able to due to the increase in traffic/ sirens/ busy road. Which can cause miscarriages and stress to the sheep. The road is also going to cause more pollution and noise.
Noise	<p>1. Benefit to cost ratio - H.E. technical appraisal report clearly show the preferred option as offering the lowest ration of all options.</p> <p>2. Accidents and noise - H.E. Technical Appraisal report clearly shows the preferred option as offering an increase in both accidents and noise. All other options show a reduction.</p>
Noise	We live very close to the A358 so are worried about increase noise and pollution when road is dualled. This will affect our quality of life dramatically.
Noise	Pollution and noise levels will accompany the increased traffic on local roads.
Noise	The road passes between and behind Shoreditch properties. Noise, light and Air Pollution will be 24/7/365 because the junction roundabout and its approach road will be at or above ground level.
Noise	Use the road surface that reduces spay and noise by residential areas
Waste	Park Barn lane is blocked off at the 358 it could cause fly tipping on the lane and possible travellers camping.
Wildlife	Wildlife crossing points - however this will not suit the numerous roe deer and one fears for them and road users travelling at > 70mph. The number of deer and badger deaths is already high - dualling will only add to these numbers.
Wildlife	From an environmental perspective there are on-going surveys being carried out. However, it should be noted that there are otters in the larger streams. There are also many wild flowers including orchids.

Appendix J.2: Organisation responses by letter to the consultation

This appendix outlines in the full, all responses from organisations. Highways England would like to thank all of the organisations for their responses and noted all points raised.

This appendix includes responses from:

- Beercrocombe Parish Council
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (East Devon)
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (Somerset)
- Creech St Michael Parish Council
- Devon County Council
- Environment Agency
- Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council
- Horton Parish Council
- Historic England
- Ilminster Town Council
- National Farmers Union
- National Trust
- Natural England
- Neroche Parish Council
- North Curry Parish Council
- Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist Church, Hatch Beauchamp
- Somerset County Council
- Stoke St Mary Parish Council
- Taunton Area Cycling Campaign
- Taunton Deane Borough Council
- Taunton Deane Bridleways Association
- West Hatch Parish

Beercrocombe Parish Council**Beercrocombe Parish Council's response to A358 Public Consultation July 2017**

1. The proposed route does not help to relieve the flow of traffic going through Henlade and with the proposed Industrial/Business Park adjacent to the Taunton Park and Ride even more traffic will be generated in that area. If this route is adopted it is essential that a link road should be constructed from Junction 25a directly into Taunton and a link road from the proposed route to the existing M25 junction to incorporate the proposed development close to the junction.
2. Highways England's theory is that traffic on the A358 proposed new junction 25a would join the northbound M5 and travel back to junction 25 before entering Taunton and travelling to such places as Exmoor. This will cause extreme pressures between the two junctions and the northbound exit 25.
3. It is essential for a junction to be constructed which incorporates Capland, Hatch Green and Bickenhall roads to the new A358 to give access to Taunton, Ilminster and the surrounding villages on either side of the A358
4. A fly-over connecting Stewley Lane to Wood Road/ Kenny, Ashill is essential particularly for agricultural traffic serving farms that fall on both sides of the A358. Equally this route is used by traffic wishing to join the A303 west avoiding Southfields roundabout or wanting to access the Blackdown Hills area.
5. The Southfields roundabout where the A358 and A303 meet needs extensive rebuilding to accommodate a dual carriageway not just minor improvements. A slip road going east should be constructed to avoid traffic having to negotiate the roundabout and at the same time the first part of the A303 going east from that junction should be dual carriageway not as at present a single carriageway on a three lane road.
6. The failure of the proposed scheme not to incorporate improvements to the Ilminster bypass A303 is without doubt going to cause a severe bottleneck particularly at peak times with vehicles coming from Wiltshire on A303 dual carriageway and likewise from Devon and Cornwall on dual carriageway and motorway.
7. Highways England's Preferred Option appears to be the worst option for our locality.
8. Beercrocombe Parish Council wishes to be registered as an interested party.

Gillian Midworth
Clerk to Beercrocombe PC
beercrocombepc@outlook.com

Campaign to Protect Rural England (East Devon)



East Devon Group CPRE
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24 April 2017

Mr D Stock
Highways England, Bristol
Temple Quay House
BS1 6HA

Dear Mr Stock

A303/A358

Improvement of the road between London and the South West has been considered in various forms for over 40 years, including:

- a. 1995 Public Enquiry – recommend dual A303/30 Honiton to Ilminster, and A358 Taunton to Ilminster not an alternative.
- b. 2003 Arup Report – confirmed the above.
- c. 2007 SW Region – stated preferred solution was dual Honiton to Ilminster (A303/30).
- d. 2016 HE/DCC confirmed only small proportion of vehicles Ilminster to Exeter use A358.
- e. 2016 HE confirmed A358 there for purpose of north/south, not east/west.

Maps of the major routes (attached) to Exeter and beyond show the situation:

- A. 2004 – A303/30 as strategic Trans-European Network route
- B. 2015 – shows 6-lane and 4-lane and 3-lane roads
- C. 2016 – confirms gap Honiton to Ilminster East/West (A303/30), with A358 dotted North/South
- D. 2016 – detail as C above
- E. 2017 – omits area west of Taunton/Ilminster and thus misleads.

The latest consultation leaflet (blue) from HE states on page 4 that it gives a high level overview of the entire A303/A358 corridor. This statement is not correct, and sets out to seriously mislead.

The creation of an Expressway, i.e. dual carriageway, to the South West from London on A303 alignment is welcome. By all means dual the A358 Taunton to Ilminster, which we support, but

The Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

Registered Charity No. 245317

that is not part of that Expressway. There is a further 150 miles of South West England beyond Taunton.

The A358 is there for a separate purpose. Cost is stated to be £250M for dualling this 9 mile section of road, as part of RIS 1, with start in spring 2020. It is not an alternative to A303/30 route to Honiton, as has been said many times before.

The M5 is full. To seek to guide more traffic onto it will cause inevitable congestion on a major road whose resilience is decreasing. On Saturday 8 April 2017, M5 was shut by Exeter, and chaos ensued for several hours. As on previous occasions, with M5 shut, A303/30 east of Honiton to Ilminster became gridlocked.

The sister booklet (brown) entitled A350 Dualling Scheme discusses section 1 and a new Junction 25A on the M5. This needs to be a 4-way junction, but that is not clear from the script.

Section 2 (page 9) states proposed widening of the existing A358 to dual carriageway. This dual has to be a brand new road, if access is only at junctions B, C, D. This is not stated, and again is misleading.

Local people on the current A358 need to have continued access to the local, current, roads. These roads are not shown. If I am correct, the locals are likely to support the dualling scheme, as they get rid of the dangerous through traffic.

Similarly, local people living on the A303 route Honiton to Ilminster have for many years supported a new dual carriageway. They would then get their local roads back, and be rid of the through traffic.

The National Policy (2014) states that there is a compelling need for developing our Strategic Road Network with roads of sufficient capacity and resilience. Dualling the A358 Taunton to Ilminster will meet that need for the North/South traffic, and should go ahead.

For East/West, the need is to dual the A303/30 Honiton to Ilminster, as part of the SW Expressway, and provide much needed additional capacity as alternative to the very full M5.

Yours sincerely



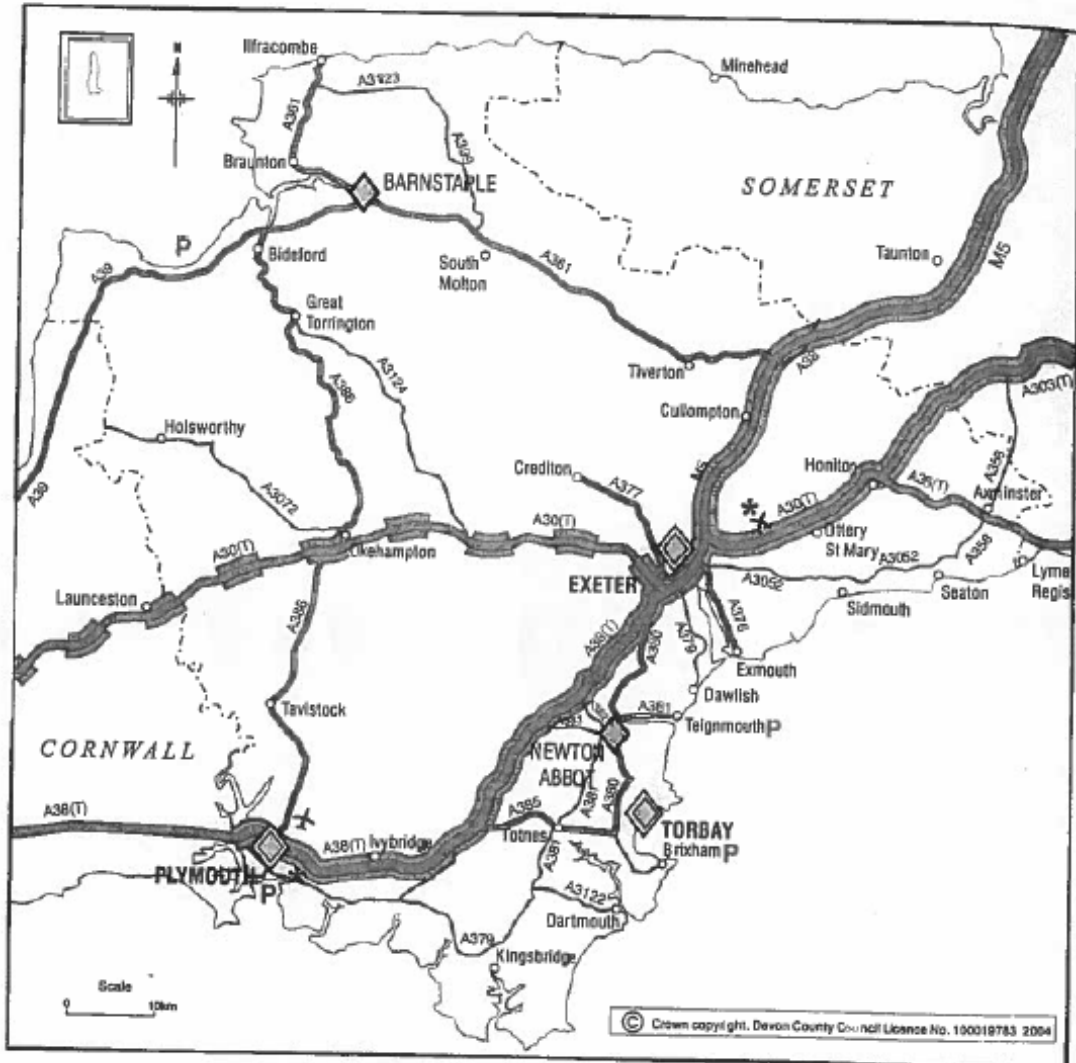
T J W Hale

cc Mr S Blackmore, HE Sowton, Exeter

The Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

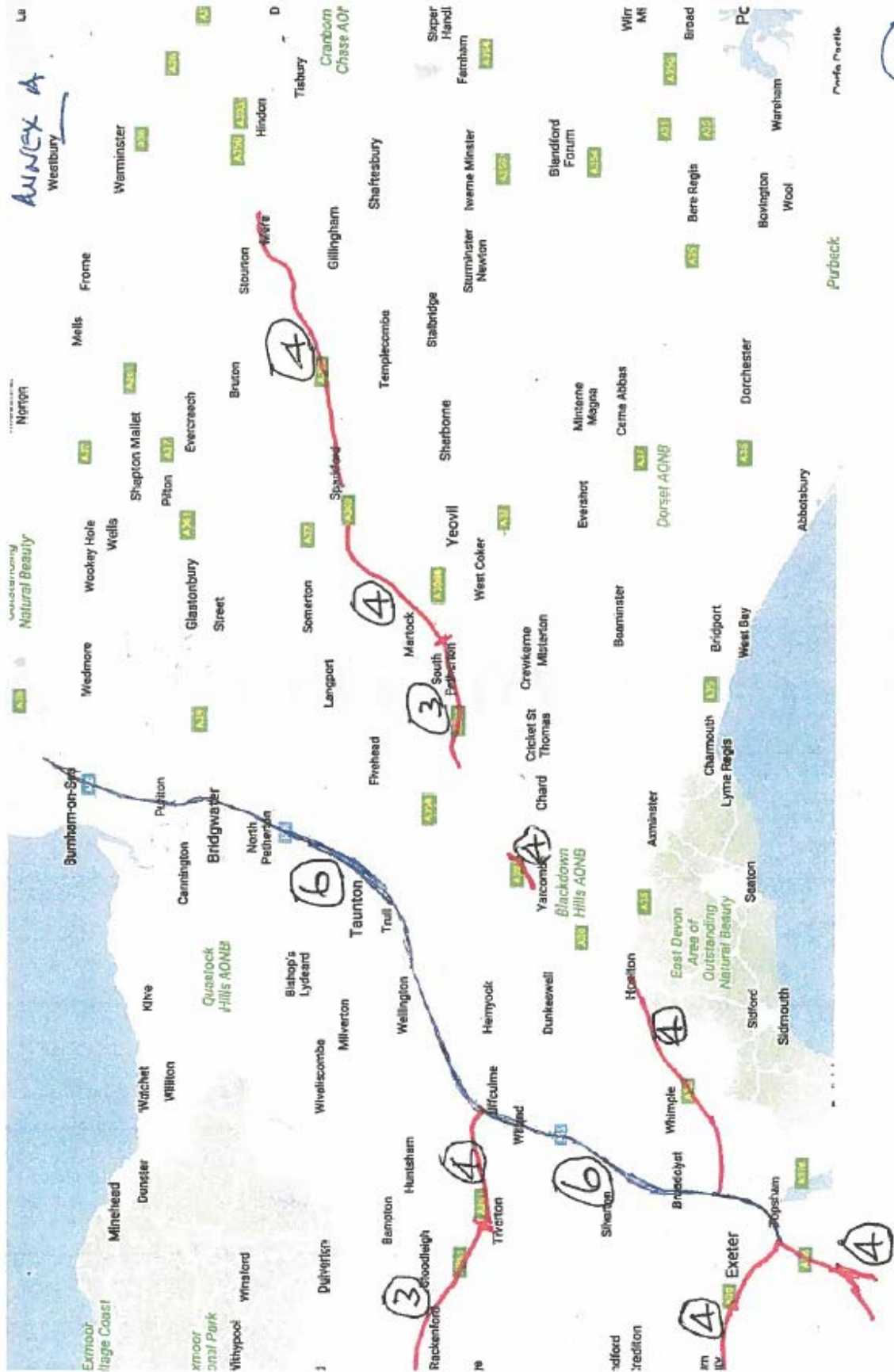
Registered Charity No. 245917

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Strategic Road Network :	Settlement Hierarchy :
Road in Trans European Network (TENS)	PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA
Advocated for inclusion in (TENS)	SUB-REGIONAL CENTRE
Motorway / Trunk Road	Other Main Town
National Primary Route	Proposed New Community
County Primary Route	Strategic Ports
	Airports

Map 14: Strategic Road Network 2001 to 2016





What if nothing is done to the A30?

It is predicted that the identified problems will become worse over time, especially with the significant growth planned for the East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge areas.

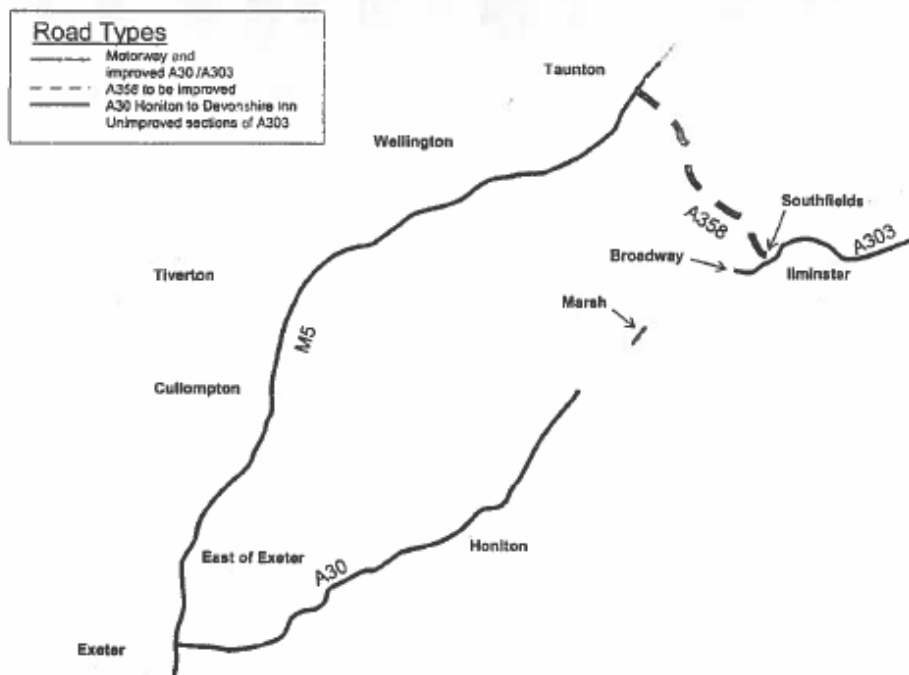
The proposed A358 improvement, as detailed in the RIS, will not solve the problems and will not improve connections and resilience to Exeter and the South West, which is why we believe the A30 improvement scheme is needed.

The M5/A358 route between Southfields and Exeter is 14km longer than the 47km A30/A303 route. In addition, the A30/A303 is dual carriageway between Honiton and Exeter and improved single carriageway between Southfields and Broadway. Currently, only a small proportion

of vehicles travelling from east of Southfields to Exeter and beyond use the M5/A358 route.

Traffic models built for the study predict that, as traffic flows increase and conditions on the A358 and M5 deteriorate in the future, drivers will continue to choose the A30/A303 route. The traffic models also show that if improvements to the A358 are delivered, the vast majority of drivers will continue to choose the shortest route along the A30/A303.

The A358 improvement is a critical scheme for Taunton, northern Somerset and northern Devon. The A30 and A358 routes complement each other, serving different, but equally vital, needs.



Impact of A358 improvements on long distance traffic



A30 Honiton to Devonshire Inn - Highway Improvement Scheme
 Public Consultation on Route Options

①

Introduction

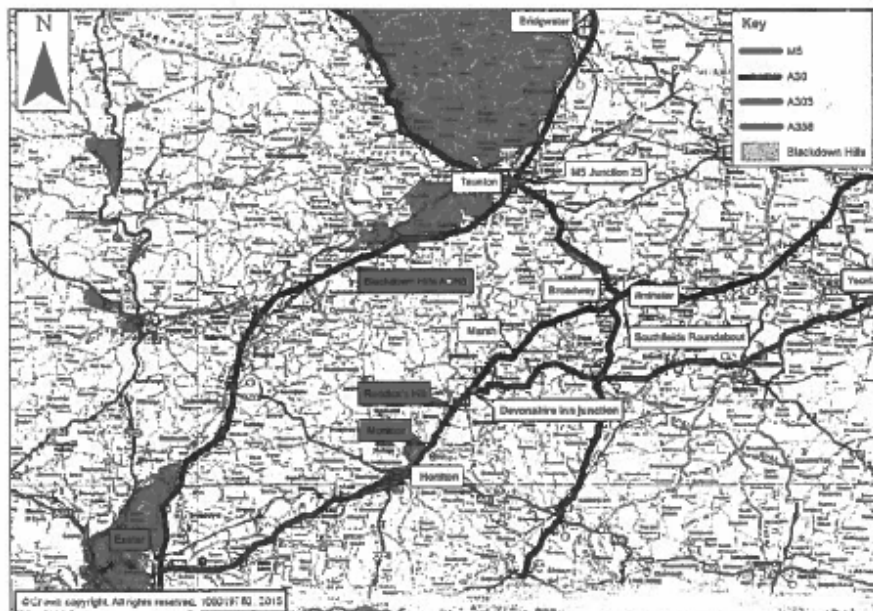
Devon County Council (DCC) is consulting on a scheme to improve the 8km section of the A30 between Honiton and Devonshire Inn, so that a preferred option can be considered for funding under the Government's Road Investment Strategy. This is the first stage of proposals aimed at improving the 21km section of the A30/A303 between Honiton and Broadway.

In January 2012, Devon and Somerset County Councils commissioned a study that identified a programme of improvement schemes for the 'unimproved' sections of the A30/A303.

The subsequent A303/A358/A30 Economic Impact Study (<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/schemes-and-initiatives/a30-a303-a358-improvement-project/>) found that improving the whole A303/A358/A30 would:

- Create 21,400 jobs and deliver a £41.6bn boost to the economy
- Deliver £21.2bn of taxation, welfare savings, disposable income and tourism benefits
- Create £1.9bn in transport benefits from reduced journey times and greater resilience

These benefits cannot be achieved unless the whole of the route is improved, including the A30/A303 between Honiton and Broadway. In 2015, DCC took a decision to progress the section between Honiton and Devonshire Inn. This section carries the highest traffic flows between Honiton and Broadway and has the potential to deliver the largest positive impact to the local community, particularly as it passes through the village of Monkton. It would also be a significant step in identifying a road scheme suitable for the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a nationally protected landscape.



The proposed scheme is located in Devon on the A30 trunk road north-east of Honiton, in the Blackdown Hills AONB.

(6)

Expressway to the South West

The Government announced £2 billion to reforming the Corridor into an Expressway South West. The long term aim is to create here 'mile-a-minute' travel is the norm.

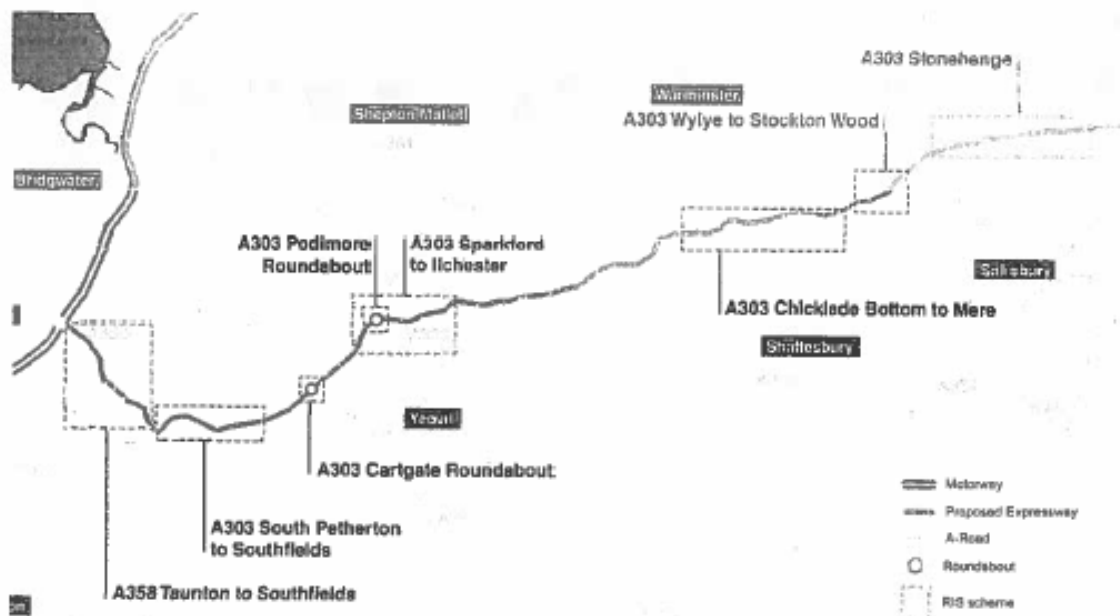
ways are a new idea for England's they will be strategic A-roads that reliable and safe as motorways.

like the South West, which relies heavily connectivity provided by the strategic road

network to other parts of the UK, the benefits for jobs, tourism and the economy will be significant.

A programme of eight improvement schemes has been identified to make the Expressway a reality, including upgrading all the remaining sections of single carriageway to dual carriageway. Figure 1 shows where they all are. For a description of each scheme please see page 9.

Schemes needed to create an Expressway



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Campaign to Protect Rural England (Somerset)


President
Roger Martin

Chairman
Prof. Chris Lewis

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www.cpresomerset.org.uk



A358 Taunton to Southfields Project Team
Highways England
2/07K Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6HA

10th July 2017

Dear Sirs,

A358 Taunton to Southfields Highways England Consultation

The CPRE is opposed to major new road building, especially that which destroys and divides unspoilt countryside. Our reasons why are clearly set out in the publication "[The End of the Road? - Challenging the road building consensus](#)" (March 2017), an independent report commissioned by the CPRE from consultants at Transport for Quality of Life. This report illustrates that road schemes:

- induce traffic, that is, generate more traffic - often far above background trends over the longer term
- lead to permanent and significant environmental and landscape damage
- show little evidence of economic benefit to local economies.

This report is an important piece of research which Highways England is requested to read when preparing road schemes in the future.

Notwithstanding this broad position and although this is a non-statutory consultation, CPRE Somerset are extremely disappointed that Highways England are only consulting on one option. We totally agree with the statements by Taunton Deane Borough Council that:

"the material presented for consultation is very limited and is not of sufficient detail for the Council to form a definitive view on the proposal" and

The Somerset Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquility and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

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Registered Office: Sanctuary Cottage, Newtown Lane, West Pennard, Glastonbury BA6 8NL
Registered Charity number 1100860

“The fact that there is only one option presented for consultation is very concerning and suggests that the responses to the consultation will in fact have little bearing on the scheme which Highways England bring forward within the Preferred Route consultation planned for Winter 2017.”

In their response to the consultation Somerset County Council officers state that they would have preferred all four feasible options to have been consulted on at this stage of the process and that the single option *“has posed unhelpful constraints on communities wishing to express views on the scheme.”* CPRE supports this view.

CPRE also feels that the nature of the consultation and the material presented does not conform to the standard of consultation which is expected at any stage of a proposal which has such profound environmental, social and economic impacts. Advice in the Planning Inspectorate’s Advice Note 8.1 confirms this. It is significant that the two key local authorities who will be involved in the scheme, and are statutory consultees, present such strong views on the unsatisfactory nature of the information supplied and the consultation. CPRE’s Solicitors, ELM Law, wrote to Highways England on 23 June 2017 highlighting the deficiencies in the current non-statutory consultation process and asking for it to be held in abeyance until such time as such deficiencies were remedied and consultees were provided with all the information and data they needed. Surprisingly no reply has been received to date.

The landscape impact of the proposal causes significant concern to CPRE Somerset as the scheme passes through undeveloped countryside, close to villages and ancient woodland. Moreover it will be visible from the Blackdown Hills AONB to the south. In Taunton Deane the Local Character Areas which would be affected are 1a Farmed and Settled Low vale-Vale of Taunton Deane 4a Farmed and Wooded Lias vale -Fivehead Vale and part of 5a Sandstone ridge -North Curry. The upgrading of part of the existing A358 and the construction of the new link connecting to the motorway across undeveloped and good quality agricultural land will cause intrusion into these well-defined character areas. The illustrative road line also passes very close to areas of Ancient Woodland which could be cut into and the proposal for junctions at West Hatch and Ashill would result in further visual and environmental disruption.

The Highways England Technical Appraisal (para.9.) acknowledges that:

“the provision of junctions at West Hatch and Ashill would increase the level of disturbance, as well as the new link connecting to Junction 25. Overall, a Large Adverse effect is anticipated as a result of Option 1/1B + NFS, Option 8/8B + NFS and Option 8/8B + Jct25.”

The conclusion in the TAR states clearly that

“In environmental qualitative assessments, all options perform similarly in the categories assessed except in the areas of landscape and biodiversity. Option 2A/2B, whilst having an adverse effect on landscape, would have a lesser impact than the other options.”

This is clear evidence from HE that damage to the landscape is inevitable and the option which is “least worst” for the countryside has not been considered fully in public consultation. Damage to the countryside has been considered to be secondary to other cost and economic factors. The impact of a new road and motorway junction will be considerable and it is not understood why the existing junction, which is currently subject to proposals for modification, cannot be further modified to accept the expected increase in traffic movements. In tandem with investment in other modes of transport, particularly

the rail network, this may be viable and no evidence has been brought forward to illustrate that this is not possible or has even been considered.

The impact of the proposals upon the A303 and A30 where these roads run through the Blackdown Hills AOIB form no part of these proposals. It must be expected that traffic flows will increase along the A303 as a result of the other Highways Agency proposals at Stonehenge and Sparkford but the unlocking of these bottlenecks have not been assessed in the traffic modelling.

Route choice and guidance is increasingly being left to satellite navigation devices in vehicles and it is likely with the increasing congestion on the M5 around Taunton will lead to the route choice to M5 continuing to be via the A303/A30 through the Blackdown Hills AOIB to junction 29 with highly adverse effects on the AOIB. The present modelling is flawed and far greater reaching traffic modeling needs to be carried out to reveal the future traffic flows on the A358 particularly on the proposals for the Southfields roundabout and for the A303/A30 through the Blackdown Hills AOIB.

The TAR reports that without mitigation there will also be a moderate adverse effect on biodiversity including badgers, nesting birds, water voles, otters, and reptiles, and a Large Adverse effect would be predicted to European Protected Species which include, but is not limited to Great Crested Newts, bats, dormice and Schedule 1 listed birds, for all the proposed options. Until details of the proposed mitigation are available it is not possible to assess the impact on biodiversity or the landscape. Highways England state that one of the aims of the scheme is to minimise adverse impacts on the surrounding natural environment and landscape. At this stage in the process this is not apparent.

Other issues which require further consideration include the impact on listed buildings in close proximity to the scheme and Public Rights of Way which cross the preferred route.

In conclusion the CPRE consider this to be another scheme which does not give full weight to the material consideration of impact on and protection of the countryside which is a valuable national asset.

Yours faithfully,

Liz Payne MA MRTPI

Planner CPRE Somerset

Creech St Michael Parish Council

CREECH ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Steve Altria 23 John Grinter Way, Wellington, Somerset TA21 9AR
Tel: 01823 666295 Email: clerk@creechstmichael.net

To;
A358 Taunton to Southfields Project Team
Highways England
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6HA

and
Nisha Devani
Somerset Highways
County Hall
Taunton
Somerset

Cllr John Williams
Leader, TDBC
The Deane House
Belvedere Road
Taunton
Somerset TA1 1HE

Friday, 12 May 2017

Dear All

A303/A358 Duelling.

I would advise that representatives of the PC attended the A358/A303 consultation events held last year and that held this year at Monks Yard. Please note this letter is the PC's response to the HE consultation.

The PC supports the principle of a new high quality dual carriageway road from London via the M3 to Taunton in order to bring economic benefits to Somerset, to provide more reliable journey times, improve safety and to avoid routing through the road through the Blackdowns AONB.

We are also aware of the infrastructure projects already agreed within and on this Parish borders' namely; The West Monkton Urban Extension (which despite its name is a significant housing and employment development within CSM), the West Monkton eastern and western relief roads, the Creech Castle junction improvement, the M5 Junction 25 upgrade, the Nexus Strategic Employment Site and the obvious need to address the traffic on the A358 through Henlade/Ruishton. Representatives of the PC have attended all the consultation events that have been held for each.

It is obvious from these to the PC that your three organisations need to be working far closer together on all these projects and that these projects need to be planned and developed within an overall programme of works; with each having greater regard than has been demonstrated to date for the others. The local communities, including this Council also need to be more involved too and phasing of the works needs to take place.

It is also clear to this Council that the impact on neighbouring communities (incl CSM) of each of these projects has not been considered. A comprehensive programme needs to be put in place ahead of safety works (including "village gateways" (pinch points), a village wide speed limits of 20mph, provision of foot/cycle way's where non exist and a ban during the construction period of large 6'6"+ vehicles) and traffic modelling is required of the nearby villages (incl CSM) which has not been shown in plans to date.

This PC appreciates that these infrastructure projects (and others not listed here) are required and are going ahead. It calls upon you to work closer together and with local communities to deliver them.

The PC understands that the reason a J25a solution is being proposed is that with Nexus being brought forward that even with the J25 improvements SCC plan then the J25 junction even with improvement will not be able to cope with increased volume of traffic and is not capable of even further improvement. If true the PC accepts that a J25a will be required but the issue of constantly queuing traffic on the A358 in Henlade, access to Nexus which must be from the duelled A358 in order to remove the need for heavy traffic to go through Henlade also need to be addressed.

I look forward to your confirmation that these enhancements will be provided and your early acknowledgment of this letter.

Thank You. Yours sincerely,


Steve Altria
Clerk to Creech St Michael Parish Council

Date 16 July 2017



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Email: andrea.davis@devon.gov.uk

Response by Devon County Council, Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council

Dear Sir or Madam

A358 Taunton to Southfields Consultation on Route Option

Our local authorities of Devon, Plymouth and Cornwall strongly support the Government's commitment to improving the A303/A30/A358/A38 corridor to create a safe, efficient and resilient second strategic route between London and the South West Peninsula.

Delivering that commitment is vital to our region's economic growth and resilience of our transport connectivity with the rest of the UK. It is a critical project with wider implications for the rebalancing of the UK economy and harnessing the productivity potential of the Peninsula region.

We therefore broadly welcome the efforts being made by Highways England made to progress the important Stonehenge, A358 and Sparkford to Ilchester sections. However, in respect of the actual detail of the current proposed option for the A358 improvement it appears to be a compromise trying to solve two very different needs and failing on both counts.

The preferred option appears to offer the lowest transport benefits of all the options examined by Highways England including dis-benefits in terms of lack of relief for Henlade, road safety, roadworks and greenhouse gases, and a large adverse impact on the landscape.

Although the Technical Appraisal Report unhelpfully does not provide specific traffic data for the impact of the preferred option on the M5 south of Taunton, there is a clear strategic intention that more traffic from the A303 Southfields will be encouraged to use the proposed new route to reach destinations further west in the Peninsula.

The M5 is clearly currently at capacity during busy periods and sending more traffic onto this section without significant investment will increase the likelihood of

Chief Executive Phil Norrey

incidents, further eroding the resilience of the region's only strategic road link worthy of the description with the rest of the UK.

At the same time, as the TAR reveals, the proposal will lengthen journey times on the alternative A303/A30 route to Exeter through increased congestion at Southfields. The effect is likely to herd more southbound traffic onto the M5 with increased risk of congestion and disruption. The hard reality that this option cannot address is simply this: there is no single solution that can feasibly meet the proven need for a strategic second link to the economic growth areas in Somerset *and* the proven need for a strategic second link to the economic growth areas in Devon, Plymouth and Cornwall.

In addition there has clearly been a lack of investment in the A38 which has been highlighted within the DfT's new Transport Investment Strategy (July 2017), where the A38 is identified as suffering from regular, severe congestion. This demonstrates an existing and urgent need to provide long term investment for the South West strategic road network if a resilient transport corridor capable of supporting economic growth and re-balancing the economy is to be accomplished.

Somerset requires a better solution for the A358 than this and the economic growth areas in our local authorities further west require a scheme that will significantly improve the A303/A30/A38 link.

Yours faithfully



Councillor Andrea Davis
Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Development and Waste

Chief Executive Phil Norrey

The Environment Agency

Mr David Stock
Highways England
Temple Quay House
(2) The Square
Bristol
BS1 6HA

Our ref: WX/2017/130538/01-L01
Your ref:
Date: 19 May 2017

Dear Mr Stock

**A358 TAUNTON TO SOUTHFIELDS DUALLING SCHEME PROPOSED ROUTE
OPTION - NON-STATUTORY STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
(SOCC)**

Thank you for your consultation regarding the above.

Please find hereunder our preliminary opinion in respect of issues pertinent to our interests, which will form the basis for further, more detailed assessment, as the consultation process progresses. It is acknowledged that the regulatory regimes relevant to the broad issues highlighted, are covered by the 'Key International, European and National Environmental Legislation' section of the submitted Technical Appraisal Report.

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

The proposed A358 improved route does not cross any Main Rivers, therefore it will be important for the applicant to formally liaise with Somerset County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, with respect to ordinary watercourse crossing design, surface water runoff management measures (SUDs), and any Land Drainage Consent requirements.

We would expect any DCO submission to be supported by an appropriate flood risk assessment (FRA) to define all existing flood risks that would be encountered on the proposed route, and how the proposed scheme will mitigate any adverse impacts to third parties e.g. by the design of the road and associated drainage infrastructure. The FRA should also demonstrate how the road itself will remain resilient against any direct flood risk sources that could affect the route i.e. the road will need to be designed not to flood from fluvial sources at any point along the route, and remain safe during extreme events such as the 0.1%AEP fluvial flood.

We would also expect the applicant to consult/engage with all of the various risk management authorities in Somerset, to establish if the road improvement project could assist, in partnership, with the delivery of any wider flood risk reduction and/or environmental enhancement projects, including WFD objectives in the affected catchments.

Environment Agency
Rivers House, East Quay, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA8 4YS.
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency
Cont/d..

FISHERIES, BIODIVERSITY AND GEOMORPHOLOGY

Protected species and species of conservation interest

A number of protected species and species of conservation interest are known to be present within the project working area including but not limited to the following; Otter, badger, dormouse, bats, brown hare, great crested newt, European eel, and a range of both aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. Full protected species surveys will be required throughout the working area of the proposed scheme and additional surveys should be considered which identifies species of conservation interest. Appropriate measures must be taken to minimize impacts on these species as a result of the proposed development. In view of the scale of the proposal, it would also be reasonable to expect the applicant to undertake phase 1 habitat surveys for the impact footprint in order to establish a baseline for likely impacts and mitigation need. This would help identify the requirement for additional protected species surveys by indicating the presence of suitable habitat.

Protected areas

A number of the river systems which may be impacted by this scheme feed into downstream SSSIs, SPAs and SACs and Ramsars sites. As such the applicant will be expected to illustrate through robust evidence that the development will not result in a significant deleterious impact on these protected areas.

SAFFA

Migratory salmonid populations including salmon, sea trout and brown trout are known to be present within the water bodies which may be impacted by this scheme. As such the applicant will be expected to illustrate through robust data that the development will not result in a significant deleterious impact on these species.

WFD

A number of water bodies may be impacted as a result of this development. As such the applicant will be expected to undertake a WFD assessment in order to illustrate that the works will not result in a deterioration, nor prevent future improvement of the WFD status of these water bodies. Additional information on how to do this can be found on the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-framework-directive-how-to-assess-the-risk-of-your-activity>.

Invasive species

A number of invasive species are known to be present in the vicinity of this project. The applicant will be expected to undertake appropriate surveys to determine the spread and extent of these invasive species within the proposed working area. This will then inform an appropriate management plan for these species, to ensure the proposed development would not result in the spread of invasive species

Mitigation

As these works involve the expansion of existing infrastructure, it will be challenging to avoid impact on protected species and habitats. As such it is likely that mitigation may be required in the form of offsite habitat improvement/creation. Accordingly, we would suggest that the study area for this project is representative of this need, to ensure that sufficient land is available to provide mitigation against impacts. Additionally, it is suggested that mitigation is considered as early as possible, in order to manage expectations in respect of associated costs etc.

Cont/d..

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Of particular concern is the potential for impacts on riverine systems around habitat, biological continuity, sediment transport and water chemistry. This must be considered as early as possible to ensure appropriate mitigation is designed into the project from the outset.

Guiding principles

When considering environmental impact it is imperative to first assess ways to avoid impact before determining any mitigation measures. As such, we would expect to see high level principles from the outset which, if adhered to, will allow the development to avoid significant environmental impact. These should include the following.

- Bridges which pass over watercourses should span as great a width as possible following the assumption that the further the bridge engineering is from the water course, the less environmental impact. This also significantly reduces the risk of water erosion of bridge foundations/structure.
- Bridges of watercourse should cross at right angles to the watercourse and impact as short a distance as possible.
- Development should avoid running adjacent to watercourses for a significant distance where possible (likely for significant impact on WFD if not employed).
- The definition of 'temporary infrastructure' should be agreed between applicant and regulatory bodies from the outset. This will reduce the risk of challenges at pre-application/submission stage.
- Where possible, the applicant will work with local groups/organisations to achieve mitigation requirements in order to maximize the efficacy of the mitigation.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING

We would advise that careful consideration is given to those aspects of the proposed scheme that will necessitate a formal application for an Environmental Permit.

Guidance in respect of this matter may be obtained through the following link:

www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/environmental-permits

POLLUTION PREVENTION

Where the proposed scheme has the potential to adversely impact on ground and surface waters, we would require the applicant to provide full details of the specific works, including the proposed means by which pollution would be prevented/mitigated. An appropriate Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) should be submitted either individually or as an integral element of a wider Environmental Statement.

Our Environmental Protection team would be pleased to advise in respect of detailed requirements, during the consultation process.

Important information

Please note, we will charge for further technical input into areas of the planning process, beyond the environmental issues identified above. Our charged advice is provided through a formal agreement, including an offer letter, a programme of advice and standard terms and conditions. We will discuss the advice you need with you, and agree a programme to specify the tasks that will be carried out.

Cont/d..

3

The programme will also give the approximate timetable and cost for the advice. The programme can be varied by written agreement for any changes that need to be made. Charges are based on cost recovery and have been set at £84 per hour, per officer.

Please note that the view expressed in this letter is in response to an enquiry only and does not represent our final view in relation to any future consultation/application made in relation to this proposal. We reserve the right to review our position should new information, or updates to guidance occur, in relation to any such application.

The comments and advice given in this letter are made entirely without prejudice and without liability accepted, implied or given by or on behalf of the Environment Agency.

Yours sincerely

Dave Pring
Planning Specialist

Direct dial 02030 250153

Direct fax 01278 452985

E-mail: nwx.sp@environment-agency.gov.uk

Received 13/7/17

HATCH BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: David Graham: Tel 01823 480088
CLERK: Claire Morrison-Jones: Tel 01823 601495

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Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

9th July 2017

Dear Mr Grayling

A358 - TAUNTON TO SOUTHFIELDS DUALLING SCHEME

This letter is addressed to you on behalf of the Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council. Hatch Beauchamp lies mainly to the north of the planned A358 expressway alongside a section that is destined for a major new junction.

Taunton is our main source of local employment, shopping, rail and road links. Our access to Taunton is via the current A358 road. We have a dual interest both in good access to Taunton and the town's growth and continuing prosperity. That applies both to the businesses in our village (which include a bus company, a fencing manufacturer, and a maker of high-grade architectural cladding) and to private residents.

Taunton is the largest town along this proposed corridor between the A303 and the M5. A business park is planned just north of Highway England's "promoted route" to which it offers no link. Moreover, the promoted route plays little attention to a major access issue: the continuous congestion where A358 goes down to single lane traffic through the village of Henlade. (Highway England's Technical Appraisal Review highlights both environmental and traffic problems associated with Henlade.) If traffic going north on the M5 has little incentive to use the new promoted route because it lengthens the journey, and if it further offers no further access to the new business park, this problem will get worse. Furthermore, we remain unsatisfied by the current traffic monitoring reports and projected estimates for the promoted route.

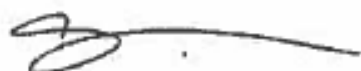
These concerns have been publicly identified by our district council, Taunton Deane, and acknowledged by our county council. We support them.

Since other routes offer both a Henlade bypass and links to the new business park, we believe that either the promoted route must be better researched or modified to provide better solutions to the above concerns or that the three other route options in the TAR must be brought back into consultation. Highways England must co-operate with Taunton Deane and Somerset County Council in finding integrated solutions to the above problems. This seems entirely consistent with the new roads policy announced in early July, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/chris-grayling-to-launch-1bn-roads-revolution-xz1km6bnp>

Failing that we see ample room for improvements on the current route, both along A303 as it approaches the Southfields roundabout, at the roundabout itself, at points along the A358, and at Junction 25 on the M5 at Taunton.

As for the detailed impact on our own parish, our main immediate concern is that we maintain both a southern and northern access to the new road if it goes forward. Without that we face the possibility of congestion as traffic seeks new ways of to get on to the proposed expressway. We will have many other concerns around access to the new road, crossings, footpath and cycle paths, the impact of changed traffic flows, bus routes and emergency services – which we will continue to study, aiming to be ready for the next round of consultation following the announcement of the preferred route. We ask you to ensure that that second phase of consultation is both timely, adequate and informative, so that we can work to preserve the amenities and services our village enables.

Yours sincerely,



Claire Morrison-Jones

Signed for, and on behalf of, Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council

cc Chief Executive Highways England Company Ltd, Mr J O'Sullivan
cc Member of Parliament for Taunton Deane, The Hon Rebecca Pow MP
cc Somerset County Council Ward County Councillor, Cllr John Thorne
cc Taunton Deane Borough Council Ward District Councillor, Cllr John Williams

Horton Parish Council

From: Horton Parish Council [mailto:hortonparishcouncil@gmail.com]
 Sent: 27 June 2017 17:57
 To: A358 Taunton to Southfields
 Subject: Pwr: Comments in relation to A358 improvements

Dear Sir/Madam

In our last parish council meeting on Monday 12th June, Horton PC were asked to send you any comments they had on the proposed A358 improvement scheme with a deadline of tomorrow. Unfortunately, the comments we have to make are very short given the little notice we were given. The comments are as follows:

- Southfields roundabout will have a larger volume of traffic because of the removal of the Broadway access for Horton, Broadway, Donyatt and Chard A358 traffic. It is already a very busy roundabout and at times dangerous.
- The country lanes leading to the A358 will need to be upgraded so they are safer and able to meet the demands of increased traffic, due to limited access points.
- We feel that communication between Horton, Broadway and Ashill would be beneficial so that we all can discuss the issues and all three villages will have residents that use the access roads to the A358 and their input would be important.
- One comment from a Councillor: 'Without something to crush, its difficult to comment. All I know is the sooner they do it the better. Horton Broadway Ashill are all popular because of their links to the M5 & A303, so speaking as someone who spends hours waiting to get on the M5 at Havelade, all I can say is the sooner they get this scheme going the better. Providing the feeder lanes are upgraded for Ashill, it should be a vast improvement. The loss of the dangerous Catherine Wheel crossing will be no loss-very dangerous- we may even get a bridge over to Ilton?'

Kind regards

Charlotte Duff
 Clerk, Horton Parish Council

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Historic England


Historic England

SOUTH WEST OFFICE

Mr David Stock

Direct Dial: 0117 9750699

Highways England

2/07K Temple Quay House

Our ref: PL00077186

2 The Square

Temple Quay

Bristol

BS1 6HA

11 May 2017

Dear Mr Stock

A358 Taunton to Southfields Scheme - public consultation on single route option

Thank you for consulting Historic England at an early stage in the development of these proposals. We are the government's expert advisor on England's heritage and we have a statutory role in the planning system. Central to our role is the advice we give to local planning authorities, government departments, developers and owners on development proposals affecting the historic environment.

'Constructive Conservation' expresses the role we play in promoting a positive and collaborative approach to conservation that focuses on actively managing change. The aim is to accommodate the changes necessary to ensure the continued use and enjoyment of heritage assets while recognising and reinforcing their historic significance. Our advice seeks to minimise the loss of significance to these assets. We also look for opportunities to enhance the historic environment.

The route option shown in the consultation does not appear to directly impact upon any designated heritage assets, however it is possible that the settings of the group of



29 QUEEN SQUARE BRISTOL BS1 4ND

Telephone 0117 975 1308
HistoricEngland.org.uk

Historic England is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 2000 (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). All information held by the organisation will be accessible in response to an information request, unless one of the exemptions in the FOIA or EIR applies.



SOUTH WEST OFFICE

Grade II* Listed Buildings at Jordans, on the southern part of the route, and a number of Grade II Listed Buildings elsewhere, may be indirectly affected. A thorough assessment of setting and visual impacts will be needed to determine any such potential effects arising from the proposal.

The route lies within a landscape containing a rich archaeological heritage. Whilst it presently has a relatively low number of Scheduled Monuments compared to the wider county and SW region, we know from previous archaeological work that there is a high potential for the discovery of significant archaeological sites along the route, as evidenced by the important Roman settlement site recently investigated near Henlade.

It is important therefore that the scheme continues to liaise with, and take the advice of, Somerset's archaeological advisers (SW Heritage Trust) and the local authority Conservation Officers with Somerset County, South Somerset District and Taunton Deane Borough councils, on the work necessary to identify and mitigate potential impacts on the historic environment arising from the proposals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P.A. McMahon".

Phil McMahon
Inspector of Ancient Monuments
phil.mcmahon@HistoricEngland.org.uk

cc: Wendy Tomlinson, Mel Barge, Historic England
Bob Croft, Steve Membery, SW Heritage Trust
Nick Wall, Somerset County Council
Andrew Tucker, South Somerset District Council
Tony Garratt, Taunton Deane Borough Council

Ilminster Town Council

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices
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Somerset
TA19 0DG

Tel: 01460 52149
Fax: 01460 55642
e-mail: town.council@ilminster.gov.uk

Town Clerk: Joy Norris MILCM ACIS MSc



3 July 2017

FAO Mr D Stock
Project Manager A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme
2/07K Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6HA

Dear Mr Stock,

At its meeting on 2 May 2017 the Town Council considered the consultation documents issued regarding the A358 dualling scheme.

The Town Council is especially concerned about:

- The lack of attention given to opportunities for economic development
- The impact for access to existing businesses, particularly those located in Ilton and Isle Abbotts – it would appear that access to these places will be more restricted than at present and requires the use of roads that are not suitable for vehicles larger than cars and small vans.

The Town Council would also welcome consideration of the inclusion of a cycle route as part of the proposal both for tourism and commuter purposes.

I enclose an extract of the minutes for your reference and information.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joy Norris'.

Joy Norris
Town Clerk

*Ilminster Town Council, Planning, Highways & Transport Committee
2 May 2017.*

b) Appeal in Respect of Application Decision Ref: 16/03479/FUL

1 Wadham Close, Ilminster, TA19 9BH

Proposal: The erection of a detached building to provide ancillary accommodation to main dwelling.

Appeal Dismissed

P87A358 Consultation

The Town Council's response regarding the consultation on the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme was considered.

Issues discussed during consideration of this application included:

- Could a cycle way be incorporated into the plans
- The technical appraisal has route options that are not included in the consultation
- The proposed route would be longer distance for people to travel between Taunton and Ilminster
- There is reference in the consultation documents to the new Taunton business park but there is not any consideration for businesses in Ilminster and Ilton e.g. the economic development of the Southfields site
- Flooding propensity of adjoining roads
- The impact on access to residential properties along the A358 and the neighbouring villages

RESOLVED that a letter is sent in response to the consultation expressing concerns about the lack of attention given to opportunities for economic development and the impact on existing businesses especially those in Ilton and Isle Abbots and also suggesting the incorporation of a cycle way.

P88 Parking / Road Layout Issues

a) Parking provision near the former Methodist chapel

Issues discussed during consideration of this topic included:

- Chicane effect of current parking arrangement
- The existing parking arrangement can have a traffic calming effect
- Visibility for people accessing and egressing from the homes in the former Methodist building

RESOLVED that no recommendation is made and any decision regarding the parking arrangements and restrictions near the former Methodist chapel are made to the Somerset County Council Highways Department using their professional expertise and taking into account all the relevant safety factors.

b) Road layout at The Triangle (and access to the car park)

Issues discussed during consideration of this application included:

- Safety of vehicle users
- Need clearer road marking and signage

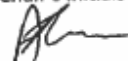
RESOLVED

- (i) to recommend no entry at all at the top of West Street –
- (ii) all signage and road markings to be in keeping with conservation area

P89 Additional Bus Shelters

Councillors were given information that had been researched regarding the positioning and costs of bus shelters in order for a decision to be made as to

Chair's Initials





Your ref:

Our ref: NFU response - A358 July 2017

Email: Matthew.Uren@nfu.org.uk

Louise.staples@nfu.org.uk

Direct line: 01392 440700

Date: 14th July 2017

NFU comments: Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme : A358

Dear Highways England,

The National Farmers Union represents over 47,000 farmers and growers across England and Wales; more than 1,800 of these farm here in Somerset.

We understand that during this stage of the above named consultation you are seeking views on the proposed route and local information, issues and concerns relevant to these works, including specific issues we feel should be addressed or concerns about potential impacts.

We have a number of concerns about the consultation, and we would request that Highways England come and speak to the farmers and landowners as a group to consult on this route proposal in more detail. In summary the areas of concern are:

1. The consultation lacks detail specifically in regard to location of the main junctions, crossing points and access that is to be provided off the A358 to farm drives, farm tracks and land as well as the local road network
2. The impact of farm traffic not being able to access the A358 in the future and the impact that these works could have on surrounding roads has not been considered
3. Farmers and landowners have either not been consulted at all or not enough for HE to understand the impacts on farm businesses
4. Why has only this single route option been consulted on at this stage – we would like to see route 2A/2B consulted upon further as this has merits
5. The consultation does not fully take into account the value of farming businesses to the local economy and environment

Impact on Farm Businesses

We do understand the need to upgrade the single lane sections of the A358 to dual carriageways to improve traffic flow and safety for the benefit of local communities, business and tourists as well as to enhance connectivity to the South West region. Many of our members businesses will be significantly impacted by the proposed route and the associated construction works between Taunton to Southfields not just from the proposed route for the dual carriageways but also from

access junctions at either end and the two new proposed junctions part way along. One of our members who runs a successful pig business near Taunton will be greatly affected by the proposed route.

We do understand that the infrastructure needs upgrading and for this to support the local economy and encourage growth but it must not be done to the detriment of farming businesses. Highways England E must consider in greater detail the impact on the farm businesses and the amount of land that would have to be compulsory purchased when deciding on which option to take forward.

Further the NFU is very disappointed to see the lack of detail in regard to the impact on farming businesses covered in the technical report. There is no mention of the agricultural businesses that would be impacted and no areas of land that would have to be taken out of agricultural production have been highlighted. This is expected at the very least within a technical report.

Consultation with Landowners

Access to and over the A358

We expect Highways England to thoroughly consult individual landowners and farmers who are impacted by the proposed works to gather their views and recommendations. The rules under the Planning Act 2008 for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects states very clearly that the developer must consult with affected parties.

We feel that there has been insufficient consultation. Landowners directly affected were invited to a thirty minute consultation slot at one of the events held which is far too short to carry out any detailed consultation on the effect of a new road on a farm business. There are other farm businesses which will not have land taken but who farm on either side of the new proposed route. The new road will sever many farming businesses who will require access at all times across the road. Direct access from the road to land is integral to their farming businesses to enable the businesses to run efficiently. All landowners and farmers need to be consulted by Highways England on how they may be affected.

The NFU held a meeting for its farming members affected by this proposal and the following main issues were highlighted:

- 1) There is a lack of detail in the consultation as the route line is just shown as a thick line on a simple map which is not to scale and the location of the main junctions are just shown as red dots. Landowners and farmers need to know
 - a. Where exactly will the main roundabouts be located and shown on a detailed 1:2500 plan
 - b. What crossings will be provided to connect up the local road network?
 - c. What access provisions will be provided to access farm drives, farm tracks and land situated on either side of the new road?
 - d. If there is to be no direct access off the dual carriageway, will over bridges and underpasses be provided to landowners and farmers ?
 - e. Is there to be a link road built in places running parallel to the new dual carriageway for local traffic to use?
- 2) Long diversion routes to access the A358 will not be acceptable for farm traffic as this will have a massive impact on the viability of some farm businesses. The A358 is a very

important link road for rural businesses in the area and as such should not leave any of them at a disadvantage.

It is very difficult for our farming members to make an informed response to this consultation without detailed information.

Due to the lack of consultation carried out by Highways England, landowners and farmers believe that HE have not appreciated the impact on the local road network and specifically through certain villages. There is concern that rat runs could be created through the following:

- West Hatch to Thornfalcon
- Bickenhall to Hatch Beauchamp
- Broadway and Horton to Ilton

The rat runs will not only be used by the local communities trying to access the A358 to reach the motorway but also to just travel from south to north and vice versa to reach local towns. Agricultural vehicles will also have to use these local roads to access land north and south of the proposed new road increasing congestion on the local road network and creating safety issues. Modern agricultural vehicles are long and wide and there are also many HGV lorries visiting the farms. The local road network is not designed to take this type and volume of traffic.

If access roads are closed, then surrounding villages will have large HGVs coming through them to get to farms. Many farms will have multiple movements of HGVs in & out of the farm all year round e.g. grain lorries, fertiliser deliveries. At peak times this could be 6 or 7 a day. At present these lorries generally travel to members' farms by quiet roads from the A358 which does not cause much disruption. If access is closed they will have to come through village areas which is not currently the case.

It has been highlighted in the consultation that safer crossing points will be provided for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians but it is imperative that safer crossing points are provided for landowners and farmers too.

Due to the lack of information and consultation the NFU requests that further specific meetings are held for landowners, farmers and their agents to provide the information required and to hold one to one meetings with farmers to consult on specific detail. Highways England need to understand how the proposal will impact farming businesses and their day to day operation so that this information can influence the design of the new road going forward and so reduce the impact on the farm businesses and the right accommodation works be provided. It is essential that Highways England take no more land than is absolutely necessary to build the new road.

Use Restrictions

It is imperative that agricultural vehicles will be allowed to use and continue using the new proposed A358 road when up graded to an expressway. We would not want the upgraded road to carry any limitations or restrictions which would prevent any type of agricultural vehicle accessing and using the entire A358. We would like Highways England to clarify that there will be no restrictions to agricultural vehicles on the A358 to appease the concerns that the local farming community have about this issue.

No weight restrictions, or other restrictions, should be imposed on agricultural vehicles using the A358. In addition, there should be no other restrictions placed on agricultural vehicles and the type

of agricultural material being transported (for example hay and straw) on the A358. Any additional local weight limit restrictions imposed to protect communities from diverted or rat-run traffic before, during or after construction must not impact farm vehicles.

Construction Impacts

We feel strongly that the impact on farm businesses in the immediate and local area must also be thoroughly reviewed and considered ahead of any construction works. The following issues need to be addressed:

- **Waste and Spoil:** Land should not be compulsorily purchased for the scheme in order to take waste and spoil from the construction works. Details of where spoil will be taken to must be provided in advance of construction and in close consultation with impacted farmers and land owners
- **Soil:** Details of how soils will be stored and kept clean during construction must be set out at the earliest opportunity and further detail must be provided to explain how soil will be reinstated for agricultural use, including information about the type of aftercare plan which be put in place. The NFU would expect to see this detail in the Environmental Impact Assessment and in the Code of Construction moving forward.
- **Drainage and field drainage:** There is no mention of the **drainage needs** for this scheme, including how both ground and surface water will be managed during construction and after the scheme is complete. This information is essential for both farm business and local environment protection and must be thoroughly considered, planned and agreed in advance of the works. Farmers will need to know how their field drainage is to be dealt with during construction and reinstated once construction is completed and we expect Highways England to clarify their powers and intentions in writing before any works begin

Environment

It has been stated in the technical report and the consultation document that the environment is a key issue and that one of the benefits of the scheme is that the environment could be improved by reducing pollution from queuing traffic and that Highways England want to avoid disturbing protected species habitats and take opportunities to improve local diversity.

The NFU agrees that the environment in the local area is very important and that further surveys must be undertaken and information gathered from the landowners in regard to the local environment.

The NFU is disappointed to find little reference to the voluntary environmental agreements, environmental designations and important habitats within the construction area – all of which are managed by farm businesses. We feel that Highways England should demonstrate how they intend to safeguard these environment and landscape features as part of these works.

Economic Impacts

The consultation documents highlight the need to balance the cost of the project with the economic benefits to the area. We agree with the need to achieve the best value for money during major infrastructure works, however, we do not believe that this consultation recognises the economic benefits that the food and farming sector delivers to this area, and we believe Highways England

LETTER FROM NFU

should seek ways in which to reduce the impact of these works on farm and food businesses, during and after construction.

- For example, farm businesses in our county contribute £217 million GVA annually with an output of £564 million agricultural output each year.
- Farm business support a huge range of other rural businesses such as feed, seed and fertiliser suppliers; machinery dealers, mechanics and engineers; legal, financial and advisory services; haulage and delivery companies; veterinary, genetics and nutritional specialists; builders, electricians and plumbers; local wholesalers and markets to name but a few.
- In addition, farm businesses themselves employ over 12,300 full time workers on holdings across the county and thousands of other part time and seasonal workers.
- Our farmers grow arable and horticultural crops, sheep, beef, pigs and poultry and produce milk for sale in local, national and international markets – as well as produce environmental outcomes for the benefit and enjoyment of all.

It is vital that farm businesses are adequately compensated for their short and long term business losses as a result of the A358 scheme, throughout all stages of the works, which should include any consultation hereafter.

Conclusion

Highways England must take no more land than necessary to build the new road scheme so that the impact on the viability of farm businesses is reduced. Land taken on a temporary basis must be returned and reinstated in no worse a condition than that which is suitable for agricultural production.

We expect Highways England to take our comments and those of the landowners impacted into serious consideration ahead of any decisions going forward.

Due to the lack of information and consultation the NFU requests that further specific meetings are held for landowners, farmers and their agents to provide the information required and to hold one to one meetings with farmers to consult on specific details.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Staples MRICS FAAV
NFU HQ
Agricultural house
Stoneleigh Park
Stoneleigh
Warwickshire
CV8 2TZ

Matthew Uren
NFU SW Region
Agricultural House
Pynes Hill
Rydon Hill
Exeter
EX2 5ST

National Trust



**National
Trust**

lan.wilson@nationaltrust.org.uk

Your ref: A358 Taunton to Southfields Scheme
Our ref: A358 Public consultation response

21st June 2017

Highways England
A358 Taunton to Southfields Scheme Public Consultation
By email: A358TauntontoSouthfieldsDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

**A358 SOUTHFIELDS TO TAUNTON
Proposed road improvement**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Highways England consultation on the proposed A358 Southfields to Taunton road improvement.

The National Trust is Europe's largest conservation charity with nearly five million members. Established over 115 years ago, our primary purpose is to promote the preservation of special places for the benefit of the nation. To achieve this aim we own and manage places of historic interest and natural beauty and have become the UK's largest private landowner. In South West England, this includes over 57,000 hectares of countryside, over 1300 listed buildings and nearly 300 miles (19%) of the coastline. Given the range of our activities, we are in a position to comment both from the perspective of a landowner and as a major conservation organisation responsible for safeguarding the nation's natural and historic assets.

The Trust does not own any land or properties that would be directly affected by this proposed road improvement. However, we own and care for several historic properties in South Somerset that are accessed from the A358. These include Barrington Court, Montacute House, Tintinhull Garden and Lytes Cary. We also look after Fyne Court to the north of Taunton, and the Wellington Monument further to the south-west. In addition, many visitors to our properties in Devon and Cornwall travel via the A303 and A358 from London and the South East.

The Trust has been an active stakeholder engaging with Highways England, alongside Historic England and other key stakeholders regarding proposals for improvements to the whole A303/A358/A30 corridor. We are aware of the longstanding challenges of highway access to the South West via this corridor and the important benefits for local communities, visitors and the wider economy that could arise from road improvements.

In response to the consultation, we understand and appreciate the need to upgrade the A358 between Southfields and Taunton, which will improve access to key parts of the South

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President: HRH The Prince of Wales
Regional Chair: Doug Hulyer
Regional Director: Mark Harold

Registered office:
Heelis, Kemble Drive, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 2NA
Registered charity number 205846

West. We would also prefer to see the A358 improved rather than any upgrade to the A303/A30 through the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which we would expect to cause significant environmental damage.

Whilst we have no specific comments to make on the proposed A358 route alignment, we would encourage Highways England to take full account of the views of communities, residents and businesses that are more immediately affected by the proposed road improvement. In addition, we would like to make some brief comments in the two paragraphs below.

In accordance with the Highways England document '*Creating an Expressway to the South West – The Case for the A303/A358 Corridor*' (2016), we would advocate sensitive design and engineering to ensure that the potential impacts on ecological interests are fully understood and are minimised wherever possible. Where impacts are unavoidable, then adequate mitigation must be carried out to enhance the landscape. This is particularly the case given that the route would affect a considerable area of open countryside. The dual carriageway solution should therefore comprise the best possible solution for the landscape which avoids, minimises or mitigates impacts on the natural environment and the historic environment; and pays particular attention to the local character, appearance and sense of place. Where possible, opportunities should be taken to enhance landscape character, ecological interests and public access to the countryside.

In respect of the implications for road users and business continuity, the proposed road improvement – in addition to other schemes along the A303/A30/A358 route corridor – will inevitably affect road users during its construction phase, in particular for local residents and businesses, as well as visitors to the South West. Going forward, we would ask Highways England to consider how these affects can be minimised as much as possible, with advanced, clear information to businesses and visitor attractions in terms of the timing of works and the diversion routes. We would therefore appreciate the opportunity to discuss the implications for business continuity at the appropriate time.

To conclude, this letter represents the National Trust's initial response to the proposed route improvement. Our view on proposals for new or enhanced transport infrastructure is guided by our statutory purpose which, in broad terms, seeks to protect special places for ever for everyone and as such, we believe the design of both new and existing infrastructure needs to be of high design quality, respecting its setting and the spirit of the place where it is located. We look forward to engaging further with Highways England, its consultants and other stakeholders as the design of the scheme is progressed and to review the details of the preferred route at the next stage of the consultation where we will be more fully informed to review the impact of the preferred scheme on both the landscape and National Trust members visiting our properties.

Yours faithfully



Ian Wilson
Assistant Director Operations

Natural England

Date: 14 July 2017
Our ref: 211942



Highways England

BY EMAIL ONLY

Customer Services
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 8GJ
T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning consultation: Public Consultation - A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the current proposals for the above scheme.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Summary

Natural England broadly agrees with the environmental issues identified in the Technical Appraisal Report. Based on the information available at this stage we advise that route Option 8/8B + NFS ('the proposed route') is less likely to result in adverse effects on nationally designated conservation sites and protected landscapes than the other route options outlined in the report. Whilst we expect it to be possible to adequately mitigate for environmental impacts, any effects should be considered in the Environmental Statement and mitigation proposals built in to the design.

Statutory designated sites

At its nearest point the proposed route is approximately 1.2 km from the nearest nationally designated sites, Thurlbear Wood & Quarrylands and Barrington Hill Meadows Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and approximately 4km from the nearest European and internationally designated site, the Somerset Levels and Moors (Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar).

These sites can be vulnerable to impacts from road schemes in relation to air quality, water pollution and disturbance to bird populations (the latter two applying only to the Somerset Levels and Moors). However, given the distance from the proposed route, Natural England does not expect the proposed route to result in significant environmental effects on these sites.

Protected landscapes

At its nearest point the proposed route is approximately 2km from the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Natural England agrees that the route has the potential the result in a Large Adverse effect on this site and appropriate mitigation will be essential, with the north-west area of the proposed route likely to have the most significant potential impact.

We would be happy to provide further advice on landscape and visual impacts through our discretionary advice service, and you may wish to seek the advice of the AONB Partnership. Their knowledge of the location and wider landscape setting of the development should help to appropriate level of assessment relating to the AONB. They will also be able to advise whether the development accords with the aims and policies set out in the AONB management plan.

Biodiversity

The Technical Appraisal Report acknowledges the potential for the route option to affect protected species and it is therefore possible that licences will be required. Natural England guidance with regard to licensing for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, can be found [here](#).

The route also has the potential to affect Stoke Wood and Huish Wood which comprise Ancient Woodland, a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). We would highlight paragraph 118 in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that there should be a presumption against authorising development resulting in the loss of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland. Natural England has published standing advice on avoiding, reducing and compensating for impacts on ancient woodland which can be found [here](#).

As part of the scheme we would welcome the enhancement of existing habitat where possible and creation of new habitat where current areas are lost through the scheme, we would wish to see plans which seek to achieve a net increase in biodiversity, in line with paragraph 109 of the NPPF. Linear routes help to provide habitat connectivity throughout the landscape which is beneficial to both people for visual screening/noise reduction and wildlife.

We would be happy to provide further advice regarding enhancement opportunities and other issues relating to biodiversity and landscape through our Discretionary Advice Service, further details of which can be found [here](#).

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us. For any queries relating to the specific advice in [this letter only](#) please contact me using the details at the bottom of this letter. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Oliver Lowe
Somerset, Avon and Wiltshire Sustainable Development Team
Tel: 02080266836
Email: Oliver.Lowe@naturalengland.org.uk

A358 upgrade proposal – response from Neroche Parish Council

1. The local view

Since the plans for the above scheme were announced the Council has discussed the issue at two parish council meetings, one of which was an extraordinary parish council meeting at which views were invited from the 70+ households present. The conclusions based on these discussions are as follows.

2. The consultation is flawed

2.1 **Insufficient detail** of the proposed junctions and cross over routes is included in the proposal. There is a question over junction C and lack of clarity over how other junctions will work.

Cross over routes for local traffic are essential but there are no details of these at all. Without this we cannot adequately assess the impact on local residents and businesses.

Further consultation once these details are available is essential.

3. The overall form of the scheme is challenged

3.1 The **main aim** of the plan is to create a fast route from London and its surroundings into Devon and Cornwall. Upgrading the A358 is not the only way to do this. Many local residents feel this could be achieved better by upgrading the A303/A30 west of Ilminster, towards Honiton and Exeter. This would avoid exacerbating the existing congestion on the M5 at times of peak use, especially holiday periods.

3.2 Relief of **existing congestion** could be achieved by improvement to junctions at the Southfields roundabout and M5 Junction 25, which are the main cause of delays when the road is busy. The main carriageway is not usually the cause of problems. The 3 lane Ilminster bypass section of the A303 is also a cause of delays where two lanes of traffic need to merge into one lane. Even if the A358 is improved this problem will continue and if it is not solved it will limit benefit from the proposed upgrade. The Ilminster bypass needs to be upgraded as a matter of urgency to reduce traffic congestion and improve road safety.

3.3 Alternative **options** for upgrading the A358 are not considered. We are content with the proposed route from the Southfields roundabout to West Hatch Lane but believe that after that the road should continue along the existing route, with the addition of a bypass for Henlade and access to the new commercial site.

3.4 Congestion issues

Unless the pinch points at Southfields Roundabout and the M5 are rectified, the impact of the proposal will be that traffic will travel from one bottleneck to another. Traffic is often stationary on the A303 Ilminster Bypass during summer weekends. Dualling this road and relieving congestion points at either end would largely remove the need to dual the A358. The M5 is often at a standstill during peak holiday times, which supports the argument for dualling the A30/A303 west of Ilminster as well, to avoid adding to this congestion.

4. More local details are needed

4.1 Access to the new road will inevitably be restricted by the nature of the new road. However local businesses rely on the A358 to supply them and deliver their goods. This is largely done by heavy goods vehicles. The present plan would force these vehicles onto a small number of minor roads which could not cope with this in their present form. Many roads in Neroche Parish are single track lanes with few passing points and these struggle to cope with existing levels of traffic. There is no capacity to cope with an increase in traffic. We realise that increasing the number of junctions is unrealistic but consideration needs to be given to how local traffic will access the proposed junctions and how improvements away from the main carriageway will be planned and funded.

4.2 Access across the new road is essential for local businesses and residents. These are numerous at present, even if in places such journeys involve short sections of travel on the A358. While this will not be possible under the new scheme maintenance of as many existing crossing points as possible is essential, even if this needs some additional work at those which are no longer an exact match since construction of the Hatch Beauchamp bypass some years ago. If crossing points are restricted those which remain will see increased use, imposing strain on the small local roads leading to them. Some at least of these crossing points must be able to accommodate HGV and large farm vehicles. It must also be agreed how any road improvements needed to facilitate them will be funded. Many of the local surrounding roads are unsuitable for HGVs.

4.3 Commercial and farm vehicles are an essential part of the local economy. These join, leave and cross over the A358 without undue difficulty but will not be able to do so with the new road. Restrictions imposed on such traffic will increase journey times and lengths and increase fuel consumption. This will all increase pressure on local businesses even though one declared aim of the plan is to help them. Some farm vehicles will not be able to use the new road at all. Provision for them must be made but there is no information in the proposal as to how this will be achieved.

Many local farmers farm land situated either side of the current A358 (often with direct access) and this access will need to be maintained.

4.4 Leisure activities

The area is popular with cyclists, horseriders and ramblers. No account appears to have been taken with regard to non-vehicular traffic, and in particular its safety. Neroche Parish has several established livery companies and younger inexperienced riders regularly use the surrounding roads.

The parish also has two well used long distance footpaths, the East Deane Way and the Neroche Herepath. It is a popular location for cyclists and regularly hosts cycling events.

5. What we wish to see

5.1 Consideration of alternative and less disruptive ways to achieve a fast road from the M3 into the South West by

- Improving existing junctions at Southfields and M5 Junction 25 to improve traffic flow
- A plan to remove bottlenecks caused by the three lane Ilminster bypass, ideally by dualling it.
- Eventual upgrade to the A303/A30 to provide an alternative route not using the M5

5.2 If the above idea is not followed a direct link from the new section of the A358 to the employment site near Junction 25 should be considered.

5.3 Greater clarity over how proposed junctions can work without increasing pressure on small local access roads.

5.4 More detail about how many cross over routes there will be and what form they will take.

5.5 Greater assurance over what works to facilitate access to junctions and cross over points will be undertaken and how this will be funded.

5.6 Further detailed discussions with local councils.

Neroche Parish Council

NORTH CURRY PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman – Mrs C D Stodgel

Clerk – Mrs. Barbara Wellwood

Please reply to : North Curry Parish Council
Town Farm Community Stable
Town Farm, North Curry
Taunton
Somerset, TA3 6NP

Telephone : 01823 490136
e-mail : parishcouncil@northcurry.com

A.358 Taunton to Southfields Project Team,
Highways England,
Temple Quay House,
Bristol BS1 6HA

13th July 2017

Dear Sirs,

A.358 Public Consultation

North Curry Parish Council is the local government representative of approximately 1,700 residents, all of whom visit Taunton for a variety of purposes, including employment, shopping, education and leisure. The great majority of residents are constrained to travel along that section of the A.358 from the A.378 junction at Thornfalcon traffic lights to Junction 25 (J.25) of the M.5 motorway and beyond. In so doing, they endure the seemingly inevitable traffic delays which occur every day because of the inadequacies of the highway network serving this part of the South West, affecting national, regional and local traffic alike.

The Council knows that a number of local residents have submitted individual responses to the Highways England (H.E.) consultation, and indeed in some cases, have shared with the Council their particular concerns. At its meeting on 12 July, the Council approved the statement set out below as its own formal response. The Consultation questionnaire, whilst allowing for supporting comments, is essentially a tick-box exercise, with the nature of the questions restricting the opportunity to respond comprehensively. The Council does not consider this format to be particularly helpful, and has therefore resolved to examine H.E.'s proposed scheme in a narrative form.

The Parish Council's response to the Consultation

1. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, the consultation process itself is based on a false premise. The sub-heading to the Introduction – "Highways England is consulting on proposals to upgrade the A358 between the M5 at Taunton and the A303" – is misleading. The phrase "consulting on proposals" might be an accurate description if prospective consultees have the expertise of Thomas Telford and the patience of a saint to wade through 141 pages of the accompanying Technical Appraisal Report (T.A.R.), but the primary "Public consultation" document gives little information in respect of the work which has been undertaken on the options, and certainly insufficient detail to enable consultees to be able to make an assessment of H.E.'s judgment of the benefits and disbenefits of those options. In the Parish Council's opinion, therefore, H.E. is not "consulting on proposals", but on one proposal only. We will refer to this proposal as the "Consultation option".

2. Similarly, under the heading of "Next steps: Selecting a preferred route" (p.12), the consultation document states "This consultation is your opportunity to express your views on the current proposals ahead of further development and final selection of a preferred route." This statement too is a mis-representation of the current position, for the reasons set out above.

3. In its review of the Consultation option, the consultation document (pp.5 & 6) refers to "A new M5 motorway junction located south of Taunton ... permitting all-direction movements between the M5 and the new dual carriageway." Conspicuous by its absence is any provision for access into Nexus 25, the proposed employment site adjoining J.25 or from the proposed junction directly into Taunton from the south, in contrast, for example, to the situation at Bridgwater. We do not necessarily disagree with this latter point; access into Taunton from here would perforce be through a residential area, bringing with it the prospect of environmental harm to those living there, but any increase in access to the motorway network would be of added advantage to businesses with a regional bias based in the town centre. If not here, then provision should be made elsewhere in the scheme for an access link into the town. It is extraordinary that the Consultation option does not do that.

4. H.E. must be aware that Taunton has recently been awarded "Garden Town" status, and yet the Consultation option offers no contribution whatever to the town's enhanced place in the national and regional economy. Taunton is as important to the regeneration of the regional economy as is Exeter, Plymouth, Truro or Penzance. With no direct link from the new highway into the town, it will derive no economic benefit from the scheme. Either the scheme needs a fundamental re-think or H.E. needs to re-define its objectives. The Parish Council is firmly of the view that it should be the former.

5. H.E. may dispute our assertion that there is no direct link from the new A.358 into Taunton. At the Holiday Inn public consultation event on 30 June, we were informed that traffic modelling had shown that some traffic having business in Taunton would take the new road from Junction 8 as far as the new motorway junction, take the new slip road north to J.25 and then take the old A.358 into Taunton as before. Frankly, we are highly sceptical of this notion. It seems very unlikely that traffic will travel twice the distance of the alternative to reach its destination. We note the caveat that traffic modelling work is continuing and cannot therefore be discussed in any detail at this stage. That being the case, until such time as we are able to satisfy ourselves as to the robustness of the model, we cannot accept the hypothesis.

6. H.E. offers no comment or supporting evidence in the consultation document as to why the Consultation option does not provide direct access either from the proposed motorway junction to the south or from the re-aligned A.358 to the east into Nexus 25 or to J.25 itself. Instead, access to the employment site would of necessity be from the old A.358 at J.25. If there are capacity issues at J.25, as we are told there are, that will reduce the attractiveness of the site to business and calls into question one of H.E.'s key objectives. In this context, the Parish Council poses the following question: how does the Consultation option address H.E.'s claim (p.11) that "Unlocking the potential for economic growth in the area has been a key objective in developing our route option proposals."? If that really is a key objective for H.E., this option singularly fails to achieve it.

7. The personal experience of Council members, together with other anecdotal evidence, suggests to us that of the A.358 traffic which currently travels towards Taunton, it is only a small proportion which takes the slip road at J.25 to travel further south-west on the M.5. As a principle, we believe that wherever possible, personal experience and anecdotal evidence should be tested and validated. We were forewarned by local residents, and sought confirmation from H.E. that it has in its possession traffic count figures, albeit now somewhat dated, showing traffic movements at J.25. We asked for a sight of the data. We also asked for relevant data in respect of traffic currently using the A.303/A.30 which is projected to transfer following construction of an approved A.358 scheme. (To address the point: doubtless, there will be an increase in traffic using the improved A.358 arising from traffic which currently uses the A.303/A.30. It is important to understand the extent of that.) The response to our request in each case was "... we are unable to provide any further detail on this information to yourself as we need to ensure we provide everyone with the same information throughout the consultation process."

8. We find it difficult to credit the logic of H.E.'s response, and to put it plainly, consider its reasons for refusal to be nonsensical. If H.E. will not release traffic data to the Parish Council simply because other consultees have not had the opportunity to review it, why has H.E. not offered it to all those consultees who might have an interest in it? That would have resolved the issue, would it not? We must make this point forcefully: the Parish Council cannot engage adequately in the consultation process if H.E. refuses to make relevant information available. When does H.E. intend to do that? If it is after it has selected its 'preferred route', as now appears to be inevitable, that is too late.

9. The T.A.R. (pp.62-64) describes Option 2A/2B as providing for the re-aligned A.358 to be built to the south of the existing road through Henlade as it makes its way to the proposed motorway junction south of Taunton, but also providing a 1.5 km dual carriageway link to J.25 and to Nexus 25, which H.E. acknowledges is of "strategic" importance. In passing, we note that Option 8 + J25 also provides that link, but in its present form, it would be of no benefit to North Curry residents or to others using the A.378 at its junction with the existing A.358. These options should have been explored much more fully in the consultation document, so that consultees had the opportunity to compare them with the Consultation option. In particular, the capacity issues at J.25 should have been examined in detail.

10. In respect of Option 2A/2B, the T.A.R. (p.67) contends that because the route passes close to Henlade and Ruishton, it would impact adversely on local residents. The route may indeed pass close. That begs the question as to why H.E. did not put forward an amended scheme with measures which would mitigate the adverse impact. H.E.'s failure to do so gives the impression that Option 2A/2B has been designed to fail. Irrespective of that, what the T.A.R. fails to record is that this option should remove from the existing A.358 all traffic not having business there. If no provision is made on the re-aligned route of the A.358 for traffic to have direct access to Taunton and beyond or to the motorway heading north via J.25 - the Consultation option makes no such provision - the reduction in traffic on the existing road will be minimal.

11. As if to emphasize the point, the T.A.R. (p.79) states that "The Option 2A/2B scheme attracts the most traffic to the new A358 (54,600 2 way flow in 2038), with the majority of this traffic (73%) accessing the M5 and Taunton via the new link to Junction 25, the remainder (27%) using the new free flow slip roads with the M5 to travel south on the M5." Until such time as we have the opportunity to examine both existing and projected traffic data and we have clarification of the expected impact of former A.303/A.30 traffic, we will continue to question the 73%/27% split at the motorway junctions. Even so, this statement makes the case for Option 2A/2B or the Consultation option, if in the latter case provision is made for links to J.25 and to the A.378, exactly as we would expect.

12. We regret the necessity to make this point as a preamble to what follows, but the traffic modelling data with which we have been provided is so far inconsistent to the extent that we are surprised that H.E. is willing to put it in the public domain. We acknowledge that this is a serious contention and deserves to be substantiated. We will do so.

13. For example, we were advised at the Holiday Inn event that if the Consultation option were built, traffic modelling data showed that a projected 26,000 vehicles would take the re-aligned A.358 southbound to the new motorway junction by the year 2038. As is noted in para.11 above, if Option 2A/2B were built, that same traffic travelling south to the new motorway junction would now, according to the traffic model, amount only to 14,700 in the same year. We feel obliged to ask: what happened to the missing 11,300 vehicles?

14. Similarly, we were told that the AADT traffic passing through Henlade was 30,800 as at October 2015. Traffic modelling data showed that in the Consultation option, the volume of traffic continuing to use this route through to J.25 and beyond by the year 2038 would reduce to 26,800. Again, as is noted in para. 11 above, the modelling work for Option 2A/2B showed in the same year a total volume passing through J.25 of 39,900 vehicles. We feel obliged to ask: where have the additional 13,100 vehicles come from?

15. These discrepancies, in each case in excess of 11,000 vehicles, cannot be ascribed to different projections of total traffic. The difference in total volumes between the Consultation option and Option 2A/2B as projected and shown by the data is less than 2,000 vehicles.

16. It is also the case that the traffic flow information referred to in the previous three paragraphs is incompatible with that set out in the T.A.R. (p.80), which states: "Operational assessment of Junction 25 has been carried out for the options both without a Junction 25 link (Option 8/8B + NFS) and with (Option 2A/2B and Option 8/8B + Jn 25) ... This showed that with the junction improvement the degree of saturation would be around 85% in both the AM and PM peak periods either with or without the Jn 25 link. All options will remove traffic to M5 South from Jn 25 whilst for options without the link road the majority of traffic to Taunton and M5 north will still pass through Jn 25 via the old A358. This explains why there is not much difference in the operation of Jn 25 between the options."

17. We are asked to accept that there is little difference in the capacity of J.25, whether an estimated 26,800 or 39,900 vehicles (see para.14 above) pass through it. We are not convinced.

18. Until such time as H.E. provides us with a satisfactory explanation of the outstanding matters to which we have referred, the Parish Council takes the view that the Consultation option as described in Section 1 of the consultation document will not serve the purpose claimed for it, it will not prove to offer value for money and it will provide negligible relief for the great majority of traffic which will continue to use the existing highway through Henlade and into J.25 and beyond. For the same reason, this option would provide precious little relief for the people of Henlade.

19. We very much regret the lack of a balanced appraisal within the consultation document of the other options described in the T.A.R. and the refusal to provide us with relevant traffic data. These factors lead us to believe that H.E. has already committed itself to the Consultation option as its preferred route.

~~20. At this stage, the Council has no substantive comment to make on Section 2 of the consultation document, i.e. that section of the A.358 between West Hatch and Southfields. We may, however, consider it appropriate to comment when H.E. publishes its so-called 'preferred route'. Without the traffic data currently held by H.E. and information relating to current A.303/A.30 traffic projected to transfer being available for scrutiny, any comment which we may make now would be speculative.~~

Summary/Conclusions

21. The Parish Council is concerned that H.E. has engaged in a consultation exercise without providing potential consultees with all the relevant evidence. In particular, traffic flow information at J.25 and the volume of former A.303/A.30 traffic are crucial to the making of a detailed case, but that held by H.E. has been denied to us and to others. H.E.'s refusal to make this and other information available suggests that it has already made up its collective mind as to a preferred scheme, and does not wish to be confused by any evidence to the contrary. In the circumstances, we must ask: how does H.E. expect public consultation to be conducted on a meaningful basis if it refuses to share relevant technical information with those invited to take part?

22. The stated objective of unlocking the potential for economic growth in the area is not reflected in the Consultation option, which proposes no link to the commercial and business areas of Taunton. Nor does the option provide any access to Nexus 25, which H.E. acknowledges is an employment site of strategic importance, or to J.25. As a consequence, the great majority of national, regional and local traffic currently passing through Henlade and Ruishton will be constrained to continue to do so.

23. Any proposal must be validated by the evidence. To enable us and others to understand that evidence better, we would ask that, when the preferred route is announced, accompanying traffic

modelling data is offered as at the date of scheme opening, i.e. 2023, rather than a far distant 2038. Current traffic conditions along the A.358 from Southfields to J.25 are close to intolerable for road users, both national and regional, as well as local. The proposed solution must resolve those conditions as its contribution to the national and regional economy, and at the same time provide relief for local people, be they car users, cyclists, pedestrians or residents.

24. From the evidence presently available to the Parish Council, we do not support the Consultation option. We favour a route for Section 1 of a re-aligned A.358 which connects to the existing A.378 and which includes a link to J.25 and to the proposed Nexus 25 employment site.

25. We wish to receive a copy of the summary report and to be advised when H.E. makes its preferred route announcement. We would ask that a representative of H.E. or its consultants attend a meeting of the Parish Council once the preferred route is known. In order to continue to represent local residents, we expect to comment further at the appropriate time.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs C D Stodgell,
Chairman, North Curry Parish Council

cc: Ms R Pow MP
Cllr D Fothergill - SCC
Cllr R Habgood - TDBC
Mr M Baddeley, Stoke St Mary PC

Junction 25 A proposal by Highways England (option 8/NFS)

In response to the proposal by Highways England) HE to build an Expressway between the A358 and Killams (known as option 8/NFS) , please find my comments below.

Environmental

- Air pollution – the scheme as proposed will add 22 miles on a return journey for those vehicles redirected from the A303, adding fuel consumption and added emissions. The scheme will have a consequential knock on effect of congestion on the M5 which will add significant volumes to an already congested road. The congestion at holiday peak periods will be dreadful and have the effect of tail backs onto the new feeder expressway, thereby defeating the objective it was meant to solve.
The objective of relieving traffic going through Henlade will be short lived. In absolute terms, the volume of traffic currently travelling through Henlade will be reached after a few years of growth, thereby defeating that objective.
Directing traffic south onto the new expressway for vehicles travelling north doesn't make sense. It adds 4/5 miles to a journey and again fuel and air pollution.
- Noise pollution additional vehicles bang next to an urban area joining to the M5 with accompanying slip roads, add up to 12 lanes next to housing. The effect of this is to make life insufferable for those occupants so close to the proposed junction. You have to travel a long way to see a comparative situation in the UK.
- Light pollution. An elevated junction bringing traffic to house level adds to an already disastrous situation , especially for those living close to the proposed junction.
- Disruption of wildlife, destruction of some ancient woodlands.

Economic

- The scheme as per your report gives the lowest cost benefit. Ratio
- In truth there is no economic benefit. This is a by- pass road for Taunton . We are told by both councils that there are no plans to develop the south of Taunton outside the existing motorway boundary.
- Taunton is being regarded as the dumping ground for a poorly thought out scheme.
- Sustainability. The problem doesn't go away for the Henlade congestion and the M5 south lanes will become more congested than already are. A few years down the track if this were implemented, more money will need to be spent to fix the problems the scheme creates.

Health and Safety

The government and other local councils have got form on picking more dangerous but cheaper options. This proposal scored negative and the lowest of all other options (your report refers). Grenfell towers springs to mind. Cheap doesn't mean safe as we all know!

A junction so close to the existing junction increases the possibility of accidents – a proven fact statistically.

Consultation process

- Flawed. One option is not a consultation.
- Open to legal challenge
- Document provided for comments is loaded towards one scheme – does not ask for alternatives.
- Use of subcontractors (Mott Mc Donald) to front the so called consultation meetings
- Treated councils as second class in the scheme when it is the councils that are the key representatives of the local population. In other words acting as demi Gods.
- How can one comment on an undetailed red blob on a map with no detail to back it up?

Other alternatives

1. Do nothing – save government money to spend on more useful causes
2. Upgrade the A303/30 – Southfields to Honiton
3. A northern link to the M5
4. A small by pass to re- join J 25 roundabout
5. The councils favourite of scheme 2a/ 2b

Any of the above is better than this white elephant.

You are playing with people's investment (property) with no regard. There are better options. Think outside the box.

N.D.Power

Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist Church, Hatch Beauchamp

The Parochial Church Council of St. John the Baptist Church, Hatch Beauchamp, TA3

24th June 2017.

To: TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysEngland.co.uk

Via

David Stock,

Project Manager,

2/07K Temple Quay House,

2, the Square, Temple Quay,

Bristol, BS1 6HA.

Dear Sirs,

At a recent meeting of our Parochial Church Council a discussion was held concerning the work proposed on the A358. The churches of Hatch Beauchamp, Curry Mallet, Beercrocombe, Staple Fitzpaine, West Hatch, Stoke St. Mary and Orchard Portman form a united Benefice and all these churches work together with one Rector and his supporting staff. Obviously services are held at these churches and the Christian community has to travel between them to attend. We feel very strongly that the proposed alterations would make it very difficult to CROSS the 358 easily without the provision of a bridge across the road, and to avoid making the journey much longer. It would also make the social cohesion of activities in these villages much more difficult.

We do hope that this suggestion will be considered and would value your comments on this subject.

Yours faithfully,

Doreen Humphrey



Secretary to

The Parochial Church Council of the Church of St. John the Baptist, Hatch Beauchamp, TA3.

(email) dandmike31@gmail.com

41, Home Orchard,

Hatch Beauchamp,TA36TG.

Somerset County Council

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David Hall
Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment and Policy, Somerset County Council

John Williams
Leader Taunton Deane Borough Council



c/o
County Hall
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TA1 4DY

Tel: 01823 359025
Email: dhall@somerset.gov.uk

11 July 2017

To Highways England
email:A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk

M5 to Southfields Public Consultation on Proposed Option

Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council have worked together to prepare responses to this non-statutory stage of consultation which we understand will assist the Secretary of State in selecting a preferred route for the scheme prior to entering the formal development consent process.

We are pleased that the Government is following through on commitments within the Road Investment Strategy to upgrade all remaining sections of the A303 between the M3 and the A358 to dual carriageway standard, together with creating a dual carriageway link from M5 at Taunton to the A303, as part of a long-term commitment to creating a new Expressway to the South West. The Government has also committed to set aside funding for smaller-scale improvements to the A303/A30 section between Southfields and Honiton to improve safety and journey quality for road users.

These investments are vitally important to the UK, South West and local economies as demonstrated by our independent economic assessment, validated by DfT, which demonstrates that if designed appropriately, improving the whole A303/A30/A358 corridor would:

- create 21,400 jobs and deliver a £41.6bn boost to the economy through improved productivity.
- deliver £21.2bn of taxation, welfare savings, disposable income and tourism benefits
- create £1.9bn in transport benefits from reduced journey times and greater resilience
- save 1807 fatal or serious casualties
- reduce carbon emissions by 9%

If these economic benefits are to be achieved it is vital that strong connectivity is provided between the expressway and key economic centres such as Taunton in order to improve journey times and reduce congestion. This is the only way that the productivity benefits set out above can be fully realised.

WWW.SOMERSET.GOV.UK



It is therefore crucial that Highways England develops the right scheme at this stage in the process and focuses on maximising the long term economic benefit of the investment rather than any short term cost restraints.

We have serious concerns about the consultation process undertaken and would have preferred Highways England to have consulted on all the feasible options at this stage in the process. The single option has posed unhelpful constraints on communities wishing to express views about the scheme.

We are particularly concerned that Option 2A/2B and its key feature of a link into the existing M5 junction 25 has not been recommended as an option for consideration when the high-level transport economic assessment presented would appear to favour this scheme. More work needs to be undertaken and consulted on to consider the implications of a link between the expressway and Junction 25 before a preferred route is finalised.

The proposed option results in a roughly even split between traffic using the existing A358 and traffic using the expressway, so the proposals need further developing to ensure a greater proportion of traffic uses the new expressway to maximise the benefit of the investment.

The proposed 'Junction 25a' has attracted local community concern. We support the principle of a new junction on the M5 close to Taunton with both north and south facing slip roads, but more work is needed on the design and impact of this junction including local community engagement; and it may need to be in a different location.

Our detailed consultation responses are attached and comprehensively cover a wide range of issues in relation to the proposals. As set out in the responses we would welcome a greater degree of transparency and access to the full suite of technical information underpinning your proposals as we go forward.

A more structured dialogue is also necessary if we are to avoid an adversarial approach to the development consent process and we look forward to working with you going forward.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of David Hall in black ink.

Clr David Hall

Deputy Leader of Somerset County Council and Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment and Policy

Handwritten signature of John Williams in black ink.

Clr John Williams

Leader Taunton Deane Borough Council

A358 Taunton to Southfields Improvement.**Non-Statutory Public Consultation Response on Route Option**

Response by Somerset County Council. 22 June 2017.

Author: Mike O'Dowd-Jones. Strategic Commissioning Manager Highways and Transport.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Somerset County Council understands that Highways England is undertaking a non-statutory consultation on a single route option for the A358 Taunton to Southfields dual carriageway improvement in order to assist the Secretary of State in selecting a preferred route for the scheme prior to entering the formal process of seeking consent to construct the scheme.
- 1.2. As a nationally significant infrastructure project, this scheme will be dealt with under the Development Consent Order (DCO) process. The role of the Council within this process is therefore as a statutory consultee.
- 1.3. The Council notes the information that has been provided in the material published for consultation including the Technical Appraisal Report (TAR), and notes that the appraisal of the scheme impacts and design proposals are still at a very early stage in the development process including early stage indicative proposals for junctions and side roads.
- 1.4. The Council notes that only a single option has been put forward for consultation and would have preferred Highways England to have consulted on all the feasible options at this stage in the process. The single option has posed unhelpful constraints on communities wishing to express views about the scheme. We note that the TAR contains details of four alternative options that have been appraised and request that further consideration is given to some of the design features of the alternative options which have gained strong community support during this consultation rather than discounting them at this stage.
- 1.5. It will be necessary for further information to be made available to the Council in due course in order for us to fully assess the local impacts and design of the preferred route proposal once chosen. The Council understands that further consultation will take place prior to the DCO process and expects to prepare a report on adequacy of consultation, a local impact report and a statement of common ground, as well as agreeing a process for agreement to detailed changes to the highway network.
- 1.6. The Council notes that the TAR refers to a number of other technical reports that have been used to inform Highways England's proposals (e.g. Local Model Validation Report, Traffic Forecasting Report and Land Use & Economic Development Report). These documents have not been published as part of the consultation process. Highways England has however undertaken to provide The Council with specific additional traffic data which we have requested in order to assist us in undertaking our statutory role as local highway authority in understanding the rationale for the proposals and likely impacts. Whilst this has not been provided in time to inform this initial response, the additional data once received will enable us to start to form a view on the robustness and adequacy of the assessments undertaken.
- 1.7. We wish to have access to the full suite of technical documentation at the earliest opportunity in order to validate that the approach being taken by Highways England in assessing the impacts is robust, particularly in how it identifies and mitigates any local impacts and models the effects of

weekend and seasonal traffic. We wish to avoid an adversarial approach to the DCO process and would therefore appreciate as much transparency as possible in the earlier stages of scheme development.

- 1.8. The Council is working closely with Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) as the respective host highways and planning authorities for the scheme. The County Council notes that at this stage in the process TDBC has submitted a separate response to the consultation and this refers to a number of detailed planning matters. The County Council's response at this stage is therefore confined primarily to matters related to highways and transport, traffic, safety, flood risk, engineering design, interfaces with the local road network and rights of way. As the two authorities have worked together on their responses, the County Council's response includes relevant extracts from TDBC's response on matters of landscape and visual impact, air quality and emissions, archaeology and cultural heritage, biodiversity and ecology, noise and vibration.
- 1.9. The Council has for a number of years promoted the upgrading of the A358 as part of an end-to-end improvement of the A303/A358/A30 corridor and wish to make clear to Highways England that it is fully committed to the DCO process, and supports the principle of a dual carriageway improvement between the M5 and Southfields. This support relies upon Highways England making objective balanced judgements in relation to further more detailed information that will be provided as the preferred route is finalised and progressed through the DCO and design stages and as detailed impact assessments are made available.
- 1.10. The Council would welcome further dialogue to agree the scope of the technical work being undertaken by Highways England in respect of the identification and validation of local impacts, and arrangements for engagement in the process going forward, including the DCO process and subsequent agreement/ sign-off of detailed designs for changes to the highway network. We envisage setting out a schedule of the information that we feel will be necessary to enable us to meet our obligations as statutory consultee and as the authority responsible for the local highway network. Any commentary set out in this initial response should therefore not be considered exhaustive and is made without prejudice to further information that we may request or further observations we may have during the process going forward.
- 1.11. The DCO process places a significant additional burden upon the Council if we are to undertake our statutory role in the process effectively. Highways England have confirmed that there is no opportunity for the DCO project to provide financial resource to the Council to enable us to undertake our statutory functions in respect of the scheme. Somerset and Wiltshire Councils have therefore written jointly to Government to highlight the potential impact of this approach on delivery of the overall A303/ A358 improvement programme and are seeking a dialogue about effective resourcing going forward.

2. The need for a dual carriageway improvement

- 2.1. The Council strongly supports the need for the A358 between Taunton and Southfields to be upgraded to dual carriageway as part of an end-end whole route improvement of the A303/A358 between the M3 and the M5 at Taunton. If designed appropriately, the improvement will improve connectivity and access to the South West Region, improve the resilience of the strategic road network and help to promote economic growth in the region.

- 2.2. An economic impact study commissioned by the Council, published in February 2013¹ noted the following key benefits of an end-end route improvement based on comprehensive business & tourism surveys and transport economic assessment.
- 21,400 jobs
 - £41.6bn boost to the economy (GVA)
 - £1.9bn in transport benefits from reduced journey times
 - Improve transport resilience to cope with incidents and during flooding
 - Save over 1800 fatal or serious casualties over 60 years
 - Reduce carbon emissions by 9%
- 2.3. The Council considers that complimentary improvements to the A303/A30 route between Ilminster and Honiton play a vital role in delivering those wider economic benefits as part of the whole route improvement.
- 2.4. A sectional economic analysis² demonstrated that the Taunton to Southfields dualling provided high value for money in its own right due to estimated journey time and safety improvements, with the scheme reducing congestion and delay on this section including a reduction in incidents.
- 2.5. The Council appreciates that the technical appraisal of the route has further developed since 2013, through feasibility studies undertaken by Department for Transport³ and through subsequent work by Highways England set out in the Technical Appraisal Report (TAR) issued as part of this consultation. The feasibility study and TAR demonstrate that in principle the proposed scheme if designed appropriately has the potential to meet its stated objectives and will present medium to high value for money as an investment with significant wider economic benefits providing further justification for the scheme.
- 2.6. It is the Council's belief that it will be possible for an appropriately designed scheme to meet the objectives of providing enhanced local connectivity to Taunton (with associated economic growth benefits) as well as providing improved strategic connectivity between London and the South West. One of our key objectives for the scheme is also to ensure traffic travelling through Henlade is reduced to the greatest degree possible. We urge Highways England to develop a preferred route which delivers on all these objectives.
- 2.7. The Council continues to strongly support the proposal to provide a dual carriageway improvement between the M5 at Taunton and Southfields and urges the Government to ensure sufficient funds are allocated to deliver the most effective scheme possible alongside the further schemes required to improve the remaining sections of single carriageway to dual carriageway as part of a whole-route improvement.

3. Route options

- 3.1. The Council has considered the four routes discussed in the TAR and the single option put forward for consultation.
- 3.2. The Council notes Highways England's broad conclusions at this stage that:

¹ A303 A358 A30 Corridor Improvement Programme Economic Impact Study, Parsons Brinkerhoff, Feb 2013

² A303 A358 A30 Corridor Sectional Economic Analysis, Parsons Brinkerhoff, Jan 2013.

³ A303, A358 and A30 Corridor Feasibility Summary Report, DfT, March 2015.

- Each of the four routes would improve access times along the A358 corridor between the A303 at Ilminster and the M5 at Taunton, and that none of the options would be more complex to build or maintain than any of the others.
- Option 2A/2B attracts the most traffic to the new A358 (54,600 AADT), with most of this traffic (73%) accessing the M5 and Taunton via the new link to junction 25. The other options attract less traffic to the new A358 with little difference between the options.
- Overall, the environmental and social assessment concluded variable results across the different route options, but with Option 1 NFS performing substantially worse in its effect on the landscape and biodiversity.

3.3. We note Highways England's overall conclusions in selecting Option 8/8B + NFS as the single option for consultation. Highways England considers that:

- The proposed route provides improved opportunities for future growth in housing and employment leading to increased prosperity;
- The provision of an additional junction on the south side of Taunton would help relieve pressure on Junction 25, reduce journey times and queue lengths.
- Route resilience would be improved by providing alternative route opportunities between the A378 and the M5.
- Reduced traffic through Henlade will improve air quality.

4. Highways and Transport Issues

4.1. The Council has engaged with Highways England at a strategic level in developing the proposals but anticipates a number of matters in relation to finalisation of the preferred route will have to be resolved in detail with Highways England if adversarial representation to the Planning Inspectorate Examination is to be avoided following submission of the DCO application. Such matters are likely to include:

- Performance of the proposed route and in particular, measures to encourage traffic to use the new route rather than the current A358 through Henlade.
- Impact of the scheme on the local road network and agreement in relation to the technical appraisal and validation of local impacts as well as matters of construction access and construction vehicle routing.
- Design of local road elements of the scheme, including location of key junctions, alterations of junctions and side roads as appropriate, provision of local access roads or an easily identifiable east-west route made up of existing links and suitable for local and prohibited traffic; and any required local impact mitigation.
- Flood risk and surface water drainage.
- Rights of way and access, including segregated crossings.
- Transfer of assets between the Council and Highways England if necessary.
- Requirements for local Traffic Regulation Orders.

Performance of the proposed route.

4.2. The Technical Appraisal Report (TAR) compares the benefits of the four scheme options considered by Highways England prior to choosing a single option for consultation. Table 0.1 (TAR page 10) is particularly important in appraising the relative performance of the route options through a quantification of the transport benefits and dis-benefits of the options.

4.3. The chosen scheme (Option 8 + NFS) would appear, according to Table 0.1, to offer the lowest transport benefits of the options considered including a safety dis-benefit. Further information

has been requested in order to fully understand the performance of the proposed scheme compared to other options considered in terms of network congestion, delay and safety.

- 4.4. Table 0.1 appears to conclude that Option 2A/2B has the greatest quantified transport benefits particularly in terms of journey time and safety benefits. Whilst it is costed as being significantly more expensive than the other options it is assessed as having the greatest value for money at this early appraisal stage. This appears to indicate that option 2A/2B performs much better than Option 8 + NFS in traffic and transport terms.
- 4.5. An operational assessment of Junction 25 in the year 2038 (using Somerset County Council's proposed Junction 25 improvement layout) has been carried out by Highways England for the options both with and without a link between the proposed new road and Junction 25. This showed that with the junction improvement the junction would operate at around 85% saturation in both the AM and PM peak periods either with or without a link between the new road and Junction 25. (85% saturation in this type of model is the point at which the junction still operates effectively but any further traffic load will start to cause congestion and delay). This analysis would not appear to present a clear technical rationale for the choice of the proposed route option in that it simply calculates that Junction 25 operates in a similar fashion whatever the route choice.
- 4.6. The Council understands that this is a relatively early stage in the appraisal of the scheme and that a more detailed assessment will be undertaken in due course, however a clear understanding by all parties, of the technical rationale for the choice of route option will be vital as the DCO progresses.
- 4.7. Whilst The Council's view is that further clarification and justification for choice of route is required, and that there are a number of important issues which will require resolution as the preferred route alignment and design is further developed, including the precise location of the new M5 junction; it is clear from the TAR that the proposed option if designed appropriately does have the potential to deliver the economic, transport and safety benefits that the Council is seeking in promoting the need for the improvement.
- 4.8. Data provided by Highways England from the initial transport modelling concludes that the proposed scheme is predicted to reduce annual average daily traffic on the existing A358 at Henlade by 4,000 vehicles in 2038 when compared to current (2015) flows, and that taking account of predicted traffic growth, the scheme results in 12,900 fewer vehicles travelling through Henlade in 2038 than there would otherwise have been. There are predicted to be a similar number of vehicles using the new road and the 'old road' through Henlade (about 26,000 on each road) in 2038.
- 4.9. Although not specifically referenced in the TAR, Highways England have confirmed that the 'Nexus 25' strategic employment site trip generation has been included in the traffic analysis and therefore the scheme does appear to accommodate predicted traffic growth to 2038 and enable the development of the Nexus 25 site whilst still delivering a reduction in traffic through Henlade compared to current traffic volumes.
- 4.10. One of the Council's key objectives as part of the wider ambition to create an improved strategic route to Taunton and the South West is to reduce traffic travelling through Henlade to the greatest degree possible. The Council's view is that the current forecast traffic reductions through Henlade can be improved upon and therefore requests Highways England to consider including measures in the DCO which encourage traffic to use the new route rather than the

current A358 through Henlade; including consideration of physical works on the existing A358 to further reduce traffic using that route, and alterations to the A358 junction with the A378 to encourage A378 traffic to use the new road.

- 4.11. The Council is particularly keen to understand why Option 2A/2B and its key feature of a link into the existing M5 junction 25 has not been recommended as an option for consideration when the high-level transport economic assessment presented would appear to favour this option. The Council expects this to be a matter for further consideration prior to selection of the preferred route and if necessary during the DCO process. The Council urges Highways England to further assess and consult upon the potential benefits and implications of a link between the proposed expressway and Junction 25 prior to selecting the preferred route and to consider including it as part of the preferred route if the more detailed assessment demonstrates that this would be beneficial in terms of economic growth, reducing congestion and improving safety, accessibility, and value for money; rather than discounting it at this stage in the process.
- 4.12. Journey time data supplied by Highways England from initial traffic modelling calculates that the new route will deliver the following changes to journey times in 2038 when compared to the 'do-minimum' scenario:
- South Petherton to North of Taunton (Bishop's Lydeard): Reductions of 4 min (12%) and 6 min (15%) in the AM and PM Peaks respectively.
 - South Petherton to North of Bridgwater: Reductions of 8 min (17%) and 7 min (19%) in the AM and PM Peaks respectively.
 - Wincanton to Exeter: Increase of 2 min (3%) and 1 min (1%) in the AM and PM Peaks respectively along the A303 and A30 due to congestion at Southfields junction.
- 4.13. The data provided appears to demonstrate that the proposed route provides enhanced journey times to Taunton compared to the do-minimum scenario. The Council is extremely keen to ensure that the proposed scheme provides strong connectivity between the new road and Taunton as an economic growth hub. Particularly if a link into Junction 25 is not provided, the precise location of the new M5 junction will be key to ensuring that the new route provides improved journey times to Taunton and supports the economic growth of the area. In confirming a precise location for the new junction, the scheme development process and DCO process will need to consider an appropriate balance between achieving an attractive journey time into Taunton and any impact of the new junction on local communities. In simple terms moving the junction further south is likely to reduce any potential impacts on local communities but also reduce the effectiveness of the route in providing attractive journey times into Taunton, so getting this balance right will be an important matter for the DCO process.
- 4.14. The Council is concerned that the proposal appears to increase journey times to Exeter via the A303/A30 due to forecast congestion at Southfields junction. The wider economic benefits of the investment in the corridor rely on improved journey times on both the A358 and the A303/A30, and whilst this apparent negative effect of the proposed A358 scheme should be removed once the South Petherton to Southfields section of the whole-route improvement is in place, the DCO for the A358 scheme should include interim measures to ensure there is no detriment to journey times to Exeter via the A303/A30.

Construction management.

- 4.15. The impact of scheme construction and movement of materials is not set out in the consultation documents at this stage and The Council anticipates that a detailed construction

traffic management plan will need to be agreed as part of the DCO process, explaining how construction impacts, in particular movement of materials will be minimised and mitigated. Construction traffic should not be routed along inappropriate narrow or residential roads. There could be considerable impact on the local highway network and in such circumstances the Council will seek to protect its roads under the legal provisions available.

Junctions and side roads.

- 4.16. The Council notes in the TAR that all junctions (with the exception of the link to the A303 at the eastern end of the scheme) are currently designed to fully grade separated standards and that this approach will be reviewed as relevant design parameters become available.
- 4.17. The single consultation option 8/8B + NFS proposes four junction locations:
- Junction 'A': A new two-bridge roundabout which forms a new all-movements M5 junction with the new A358 'expressway' located approximately 3.5km south of M5 Junction 25. Highways England have verbally confirmed that the proposed junction does not link with the local road network at this location.
 - Junction 'B': An all movements grade separated junction at West Hatch Lane to enable interchange with the existing A358 and A378. This junction could also serve adjacent communities such as West Hatch and Hatch Beauchamp.
 - Junction 'C': A grade separated junction at Ashill to provide access to communities near Ashill and Ilton.
 - Junction 'D': An at-grade connection to the Southfields Roundabout with the A303, with possible local improvements required at that junction. We understand the intention is to provide a grade separated junction or other free-flow connection to the A303 as part of a future South Petherton to Southfields improvement.
- 4.18. The TAR notes the proposed size and layout of these junctions will be determined during further design development and will be based upon predicted traffic volumes and relevant design standards.
- 4.19. The proposed 'Junction A' has attracted local community concern largely due to its proximity to residential development and due to Highways England's consultation material referring to the junction supporting major development opportunities in the area south of Taunton.
- 4.20. The Council supports the principle of a new junction on the M5 close to Taunton with both north and south facing slip roads, rather than a junction which only provides south facing slips; subject to a more thorough assessment to identify an optimum location balancing effective performance and local impacts.
- 4.21. The Council understands that Highways England do not propose any connection between the new 'Junction A' and the local road network as part of the scheme. It is The Council's view that it would not be appropriate for a connection to be created between the new 'Junction A' and the existing local highway network without provision of appropriate road infrastructure running between the new junction and destinations in the town. This view is on the grounds of the adverse highway safety, congestion and local environmental impacts that would be likely to arise due to the existing local network not being of suitable standard to carry additional strategic traffic.

- 4.22. Further dialogue with The Council will be required as part of the process of finalising the preferred route in order to ensure that the impact of the proposed scheme and associated junction strategy on local traffic movement, safety and accessibility are fully quantified by Highways England, and understood by all parties, including local communities, with any necessary mitigations agreed.
- 4.23. Early sight of the proposed layout of Junction A would be helpful to enable all parties to fully understand the implications and potential impacts (particularly visual impacts and noise impacts) of a new junction at this location; and to clarify how existing local network connectivity over the M5 (currently via a bridge at Killams Lane) will be maintained. It is anticipated that the precise location of this junction on the M5 has a degree of flexibility at this 'outline' stage and urges Highways England to confirm that the location will be established through further dialogue prior to (and if necessary as part of) the DCO process taking into account further technical design work, further appraisal of potential impacts and community views.
- 4.24. The proposed junction strategy for 'Section 2' significantly reduces opportunities for local traffic to access the A358 compared to the current provision, and this will inevitably increase the volume of local traffic travelling along less-suitable local roads to reach an access point onto the new road; which may have significant environmental impact on communities along those routes. Careful consideration will be needed to avoid the scheme leading to additional traffic using unsuitable minor roads such as West Hatch Lane where particular community concerns have been raised.
- 4.25. The TAR identifies that the proposal for 'Section 2' to upgrade the existing A358 alignment to 'expressway' with no parallel local access road provision limits opportunities for east-west movements by local traffic; and that this may encourage 'junction hopping' by local traffic between any proposed junctions. The TAR notes this could have adverse safety implications due to excessive merging/weaving on the mainline, or else use of inappropriate local roads, many of which are of relatively low standard. The TAR notes that HE should consider providing a Local Access Road or an easily identifiable east-west route made up of existing links and suitable for local and prohibited traffic. The Council supports this suggestion should the proposal for 'Section 2' be taken forward, and also requests that the need for further connections between the new road and the local network along 'Section 2' are considered in the light of a more detailed assessment of the impacts on the local road network and appropriate mitigation.
- 4.26. The proposals appear ambiguous about requirements for Non-Motorised User (NMU) provision at this stage, as NMU's may be banned from expressways and an objective for the scheme is to be expressway compatible. The scheme will need to ensure appropriate long-term provision for NMU movement is made particularly as the proposed 'Section 2' of the improvements does not leave a local road in place for east-west movement.
- 4.27. The TAR notes that structures (primarily overbridges), will be required to carry side roads across the proposed new road and maintain local road connectivity. The exact location of any junctions connecting the scheme with the local road network and of any overbridges/underbridges connecting local roads to be provided along the scheme length are unknown at this stage. Engagement with The Council will be essential in order that safe and appropriate layouts and designs are agreed for any elements of the scheme interfacing with or impacting on the local road network. This includes junctions, overbridges and underpasses, changes to alignment of side roads or any other elements of the scheme. The TAR includes an initial safety review of the outline proposals and The Council notes that initial safety concerns

have been recorded for a number of in principle design issues. Engagement with The Council will be necessary to ensure that safe and appropriate design solutions are agreed.

Flood Risk and Drainage

4.28. Detailed proposals for drainage and flood risk management are not set out in the consultation documents and the Council will require further information on those matters in order to agree that any temporary proposals and permanent solutions have adequately considered all flood risk and drainage considerations, including how the drainage system will function once it is constructed. It will be imperative to ensure that this scheme does not increase the flood risk in other areas.

Public Rights of Way

4.29. The TAR identifies that many Public Rights of Ways (PRoWs), undesignated paths and cycle routes are situated within the vicinity of all scheme options, a number of which have been severed by the construction of the existing A358, A303 and M5 roads. The TAR notes that crossings suitable for non- motorised users (NMU) are not common features in the area.

4.30. The TAR notes that there are 77 footpaths, 2 Sustrans cycle routes, 10 bridleways; and 2 long distance paths within 200m of the proposed option. Reference to the Neroche Herepath and the East-Deane Way appears to have been omitted and as these are important promoted routes regionally (particularly with the Herepath being a multi-user path), potential impacts on these routes should be given specific consideration.

4.31. The TAR notes that Non-Motorised User (NMU) surveys were undertaken in September 2016 but these have not been made available to The Council, and the TAR also contains narrative which indicates that outcomes from NMU surveys have yet to influence the design proposals.

4.32. Several footpaths and bridleways intersect the new highway alignment. All the proposed options would require the severance of several of these PRoWs. The TAR notes that these severed PRoWs would likely be replaced in the form of footbridges or underpasses, if deemed necessary following the completion of NMU surveys. It is unclear from the option design how these will be catered for in the new dual-carriageway design, and it should be noted that equestrian needs should be catered for in any new bridges or underpasses.

4.33. It is noted that the Council's adopted 'Rights of way improvement plan 2' is missing from the policy summary within the technical appraisal report and this contains several action and policy statements which are relevant to the scheme, particularly Action 1.4 and policy statements 3.1, 3.2 and 3.10.

4.34. Mitigation for severed ProWs will be necessary and this will either be in the form of diversion to the closest over/underbridge or the provision of a purpose built crossing for NMUs. Engagement with the Council will be essential in order that appropriate off-road space for NMUs is provided, appropriate parapet heights are provided particularly for equestrians, and appropriate diversion alignments are agreed. Where the mitigation is provision of a dedicated NMU over/underbridge then every consideration should be given to providing access for all NMUs, and looking at what local improvements could be made either in physical or legal status to improve the situation for NMUs.

- 4.35. Any NMU studies should not be taken as a reflection of lack of demand. The current flows on the A358 are likely to be a deterrent for many NMUs in using the current path network.
- 4.36. The TAR notes that with a new offline highway proposed the existing A358 will become an important route for local access – including for NMUs – particularly if certain vehicle types are banned from using the new highway. Reduced traffic levels on the existing A358 may encourage increased vehicle speeds. NMUs will not be adequately catered for as there is currently very limited infrastructure specifically for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The Council expects this issue and associated mitigation to be given further consideration prior to and if necessary as part of the DCO.
- 4.37. It is highly recommended that detailed discussion takes place with local user group representatives to ensure that any routes believed to carry public rights, or higher rights than are already recorded, are captured and considered as part of proposal development. We understand that Somerset Local Access Forum has not had a specific consultation letter for either of the A303 schemes currently being promoted in Somerset and please note that this is an important forum to engage with going forward.

Transfer of assets between the Council and Highways England

- 4.38. The single option being consulted upon appears to require incorporation of parts of the local highway network into Highways England's Strategic Road Network as part of the DCO process; particularly parts of the existing A358 which form 'Section 2' of the proposed scheme. The Parties must ensure that responsibility for each section of road is discussed within the DCO process so there is clarity over what transfers to Highways England and what remains the responsibility of the local highway authority.

Requirements for local Traffic Regulation Orders.

- 4.39. The Council will need to be assured, before the DCO application is made, that all identified necessary TROs are included in the process, in particular that it is not left for the Council to address TROs necessary to regulate traffic on the existing county road network before, during or after construction.

5. Environmental and Social Impacts

Overview

- 5.1. The Council notes that initial environmental and social impact assessments have been undertaken and that consultation has started with the statutory environmental bodies. The Council notes that the options have varying levels of impact on Noise, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases, Landscape, Archaeology, Listed Buildings, Historic Environment, Biodiversity, Water Environment, Physical Activity, Journey Quality and Severance.
- 5.2. At this stage in the process The Council refers Highways England to Taunton Deane Borough Council's consultation response in respect of matters of landscape and visual impact, air quality and emissions, archaeology and cultural heritage, biodiversity and ecology, noise and vibration as follows:
- 5.3. Relevant extracts from TDBC's response on environmental matters supported by the Council:

Landscape and Visual (from TDBC)

- 5.4. The report acknowledges that there is a significant wealth of assets with designated environmental status near the four routes including landscape, ecological and historical features
- 5.5. It is assumed that a landscape and Visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been carried out to assess the landscape impact of the various routes but there is no reference to such an assessment. It would be useful to see a map showing the zone of theoretical visibility and a map showing the various viewpoints used for assessing each route. It is unclear how conclusions on landscape impact have been made
- 5.6. The preferred scheme area passes through four identified National landscape character regions within the districts of Taunton Deane and South Somerset (National Character Areas (NCA): 143 Mid Somerset Hills, 140 Yeovil Scarplands, 147 Blackdowns and 146 Vale of Taunton and Quantock Ridges
- 5.7. However no mention is made to local landscape character areas. In Taunton Deane these are 1a Farmed and Settled Low vale-Vale of taunton Deane 4a Farmed and Wooded Lias vale -Fivehead Vale and part of 5a Sandstone ridge -North Curry.
- 5.8. The route passes very close to the nationally protected landscape, the Blackdown hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) the boundary of which is which usefully shown on the constraints map.
- 5.9. There is reference to the two long distance footpaths (East Deane way and Neroche Herepath) that will be affected by the preferred road route but these recreation routes are not shown on plan. The report acknowledges the importance of Stoke Hill as a prominent landscape feature in the area but fails to mention Thorn Clump SLF. (Special landscape Feature).
- 5.10. Although there is no specific landscape legislation, reference and consideration should be made and given to the European landscape Convention which the UK signed up to in 2006. It is considered that the National parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 should also be taken into account. When listing local relevant policies in Taunton Deane district, CP8 policy which states that the council will conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment should also be considered. There is no mention in the report of the councils' green wedge at Vivary and Cotlake Hill or the Special landscape feature (SLF) of Thorn clump at Henlade
- 5.11. All four proposed route options would traverse the agricultural landscape between Taunton in the west and Ilminster in the east.
- 5.12. One of the options (1/1B+NFS) within the TAR which is the furthest away from the existing A358 corridor being within an otherwise agricultural and tranquil environment would lead to a more notable change than those routes near the existing A358 corridor. This option would also be set at the base of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which rise to the south. Existing far reaching views of and from the AONB would be disrupted by the presence of the new route. This route has great landscape and biodiversity impact.
- 5.13. On the lowland plain, the visibility of the Options 8/8B + NFS (the preferred route) and Option 8/8B + Jct25 may be limited by intervening vegetation, but the schemes would still be visible from the adjacent Blackdown Hills AONB. The provision of junctions at West Hatch and Ashill would increase the level of disturbance, as would the upgrading of part of the existing A358 and the construction of the new link over the lowland plain connecting to the motorway.

This route also encroaches slightly on the lower slopes of Stoke Hill possibly resulting in cutting into the hillside, and would also result in the destruction of some woodland at Huish woods.

- 5.14. The preferred route 8-8B+NFS would also be visible from local visual receptors along the A358 and from the proposed housing extension in the Killams area of Taunton.
- 5.15. Option 2A/2B would have the less landscape impact being in the most part either passing in close proximity to the existing A358, however this option would be visible from local visual receptors such as residential properties close to the route.

Air Quality and Emissions (from TDBC)

- 5.16. The TAR states that "The air quality appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG) unit A3 chapter 3. Net present values (NPV) have been calculated for both local and regional changes in air quality."
- 5.17. The report states that "All options show local improvements in ambient air quality due to reduced congestion on the affected road network. This is balanced against predicted regional increases in emissions due to overall traffic growth. For Option 2A/2B, the regional increases outweigh the local improvements, resulting in a small dis-benefit for this option with small benefits for the other options. All options have the potential to decrease noise in local residential areas, apart from option 8 NFS which has the potential to increase noise in local residential areas. These are represented by benefits in the quantitative appraisal, except for option 8 NFS which shows a dis-benefit".
- 5.18. It is not possible to comment on the accuracy of the figures or assumptions made during the assessments as there is no data provided with the report. There are no details of existing and potential air quality, noise levels or traffic levels.
- 5.19. The TAG document that is referred to in the Report outlines how the assessment compares the existing noise/air quality to the levels that could be expected with a proposed new road. It is based on predictions of traffic levels and a number of other assumptions. There is also no discussion or comment on the results, what factors may affect the air quality or noise levels or any mitigation that could be used.
- 5.20. There is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) on the A358 in Henlade which was declared due to high levels of nitrogen dioxide. This is due to the high levels of road traffic and the residential buildings being close to the road. It is likely that a road by-passing Henlade would reduce traffic and also the levels of pollutants on the existing A358. The Report does not include details of the changes in traffic levels on the existing A358 in Henlade due to each proposal, however, there is an estimate of the traffic levels on the new stretch of the A358 to the east of the existing A358.
- Option 1 + NFS (31,700 2 way flow in 2038),
 - Option 8/8B + Junction 25 (45,900 2 way flow in 2038)
 - Option 8/8B + NFS (26,000 2 way flow in 2038).
 - Option 2A/2B scheme attracts the most traffic to the new A358 (54,600 2 way flow in 2038), with the majority of this traffic (73%) accessing the M5 and Taunton via the new link to Junction 25, the remainder (27%) using the new free flow slip roads with the M5 to travel south on the M5.
- 5.21. Option 2A/2B has the highest flow of traffic on the new stretch of A358 and so this would

indicate that it would result in the lowest levels of traffic on the existing A358 through Henlade. This is backed up by the statement that 73% of the traffic would be using the link to Junction 25 to access Taunton and the M5 north, and so for the other options without the link to Junction 25 a lot of this traffic would be using the existing A358.

- 5.22. Without any calculation or explanation of the results it can only be assumed that any improvements due to reduction of traffic on the A358 in Henlade are outweighed by increases in air pollution at other properties. It may be that Option 2A/2B passes closer to houses than the other three options which pass through more rural areas. Even so, it would be surprising if the new road was closer to houses than the existing A358 in Henlade.
- 5.23. The Council has been producing Action Plans with the aim to improve air quality in the AQMAs, however, as the pollution is due to road traffic on a main road the Council is very limited in what it can do. It is likely that the only way to meet air quality standards at Henlade is to provide a by-pass to remove most of the traffic from the road.
- 5.24. Therefore, further detail should be provided on how a proposal that removes the most traffic from the built up area of the A358 at Henlade leads to a dis-benefit in overall air quality.
- 5.25. In summary, there is not enough information on air quality or noise in the Appraisal Report to allow a full comment or view on these issues. The report does not provide detail or an explanation of how each route may affect certain areas, there is no explanation as to why the options that result in dis-benefit to noise and to air quality are different, when both are based on traffic flows. There is no explanation as to how the option that removes the most traffic from the A358 through Henlade results in a dis-benefit for air quality. The new road should have a quiet road surface and appropriate mitigation.

Air Quality (Additional SCC comment)

- 5.26. The TAR notes that recent TDBC air quality reports (2011) do not report any exceedances of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objective in 2010 at Henlade. Somerset County Council understands that more recent data does show exceedances in 2016 so we request that HE uses the latest data as a basis for decision making.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (from TDBC)

- 5.27. Poundisford Park Pale Scheduled Monument and Poundisford Park Grade II Registered Park and Garden are located within 300m of Option 1 + NFS. There is a Cross in St. Aldhelm and St. Eadburga churchyard Scheduled Monument within 1km of Options 2A/2B, 8 + NFS and 8 + Jct25.
- 5.28. There are many listed buildings within the 1km of all four scheme options, consisting of Grade I, Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings; and many records of archaeological events and finds within 1km of the proposed options, many of which run along the existing A358.
- 5.29. The heritage section of the consultation document is poor and while it mentions archaeology, the impact on historic buildings and heritage assets is not considered in any detail. Historic England has now produced its replacement for the PPS5 Practice Guidance. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' needs to be specifically referred to as well as the considerations set out in the NPS and NPPF. Highways England need to produce a Statement of Historic Significance.

Bio Diversity and Ecology (from TDBC)

- 5.30. The report acknowledges that there is a significant wealth of assets with designated environmental status near all four routes and shows these on the constraints map. A smaller scale map showing the location of the SACS (Hestercombe, Bracket's Coppice, Exmoor and Quantock Oakwoods and Beer Quarry and caves (all designated for bat populations) would be useful.
- 5.31. It appears that , Option 1/1B + NFS was ruled out as it was anticipated to have a Large Adverse effect on the protected site Thurlbear Wood and Quarrylands Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and designated ancient woodland located 100m east and downstream of the option centreline.
- 5.32. The proposed works for all options would impact on habitats potentially resulting in permanent loss of habitats of high to medium conservation value. The report states that the habitats have been surveyed but due to the large area covered by the route there is no plan showing all habitat types listed within the Somerset LBAP and Taunton Deane LBAP, including hedgerows and standing water.
- 5.33. It is not clear at this stage what the impacts may be. These impacts may include, but are not limited to habitat removal and fragmentation, disturbance, air pollution, noise and vibration, which will adversely reduce the integrity of the protected sites.
- 5.34. The report states that protected, including European protected species will be affected by the new road but does not discuss any detail. Full field surveys are required to assess the impact the preferred route would have on protected sites and protected species. It is understood that these surveys are currently taking place.
- 5.35. The report lists all legislation relevant to biodiversity on p45. However it is considered that the National parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 should also be listed. When listing local relevant policies in Taunton Deane district CP8 should also be listed.
- 5.36. The preferred route Option 8/8B + NFS mainly tries to avoid the protected sites but it is considered it comes too close to the mapped ancient woodland leaving no buffer. At Huish woods near Ashe farm it appears as though the woodland will be directly impacted upon. There will also be a moderate effect on South Taunton Streams Local Nature Reserve (LNR) near Killams in Taunton. We know from our species occurrence mapping that dormice are likely to be a particular issue at Killams and on the lower slopes of Stoke hill near Arundells farm.

Bio Diversity and Ecology (additional issues raised by SCC)

- 5.37. Dualling the A358 is likely to have the effect of an increase in habitat fragmentation. Individual species and species groups are mentioned and we request that this effect is fully assessed and mitigated in the design of the new road using proven techniques. This should be integral to the design process of the overall proposal and not considered as an afterthought as happens on many occasions.
- 5.38. No mention is made of Somerset's Ecological Network which has been modelled by Somerset Wildlife Trust with support from Somerset County Council and Forest Research (part of Defra). There is a page about it on the County's website. If not already aware the consultants dealing with this aspect should include an assessment and mitigation to maintain the network.

See <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/policies/ecological-networks/>

Noise and Vibration (from TDBC)

- 5.39. The TAR states that "The noise appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with TAG unit A3 chapter 2. Net present values (NPV) have been calculated for changes in noise, amenity and several specific health issues. To derive the NPVs, calculated values for each house within the respective option study areas required independent entries in the WebTAG Noise Worksheets for 'with' and 'without' scheme in both opening and design years".
- 5.40. As with air quality the assessment finds a benefit with three of the proposals, but a dis-benefit with one of them, in this case Option 8+ NFS, Again, there is no supporting information or comment on these figures. The calculations would be based on changes in traffic flows and how noise levels will change at properties with the proposed roads.
- 5.41. For both noise and air quality there is no information on which areas will be adversely affected by noise and which will benefit. Also, as both are a result of changes in road traffic, there is no comment on why one option results in a disbenefit for noise whereas a different option gives a disbenefit for air quality.
- 5.42. All of the proposals will result in an increase in traffic on the A358 due to traffic diverting to the new road from the A303/A30 over the Blackdown Hills. However, there is no information in the report on the potential increase in road traffic levels.
- 5.43. Any new road should be built using a quiet road surface, as reducing noise at source is normally more effective than trying to deal with noise after it has been generated. Noise mitigation such as barriers should be used where needed.
- 5.44. In summary, there is not enough information on air quality or noise in the Appraisal Report to allow a full comment or view on these issues. The report does not provide detail or an explanation of how each route may affect certain areas, there is no explanation as to why the options that result in dis-benefit to noise and to air quality are different, when both are based on traffic flows. There is no explanation as to how the option that removes the most traffic from the A358 through Henlade results in a dis-benefit for air quality. The new road should have a quiet road surface and appropriate mitigation.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1. Continued engagement with the affected communities, landowners, the Councils, environmental bodies and the South West Heritage Trust will be essential as Highways England develop their plans up to DCO to ensure potential community and environmental impacts of the preferred route are identified and mitigated.

END

Stoke St Mary Parish Council

Stoke St Mary Parish Council response to Highways England Ltd proposal to improve the A358 from Taunton to Southfields Roundabout

Introduction:

The consultation period for this road scheme began on 28 March 2017 and will close on 16 July 2017.

The parish of Stoke St. Mary will be the parish most affected by a proposed six kilometre, dual carriageway, which will run from one end of the parish at Ashe Farm to the other near to Taunton Racecourse.

We submit that this consultation is flawed and should be halted and recommenced with other scheme options and a substantial increase in technical detail made available, to enable a meaningful consultation to take place. Letters of objection to the form of this consultation were sent to the Secretary of State for Transport and to the C.E.O. of Highways England Ltd. (HE) dated 17 June 2017. At the time of writing those letters remain unanswered.

The Current Proposal:

There are many issues emanating from the current Highways England Ltd proposals and we will deal with them as individual items as listed in HE Technical Appraisal Report (TAR), Section 2.1. RIS Objectives.

- Making the network safer:
- Improving user satisfaction:
- Supporting the smooth flow of traffic
- Encouraging economic growth
- Delivering better environmental outcomes
- Helping cyclists, walkers and other vulnerable users of the network
- Achieving real efficiency

Firstly we contend that HE have achieved none of its strategy objectives:

Safety:

According to the TAR supplied by HE, the proposed route actually increases accident costs. In the present climate this is totally unacceptable, particularly when all other options improve safety. This does not achieve HE's mandate for safer roads. Safety is paramount and must not be compromised.

User Satisfaction:

We have grave concerns that the traffic information supplied with the TAR is out of date and therefore inaccurate. We were also astounded to learn that summer holiday traffic had not been monitored and the proposed road scheme was being forwarded without this information being available. It is impossible to assess the efficacy of the proposed solution without a full understanding of traffic flow at peak and non-peak times.

Supporting the smooth flow of traffic

The proposed route does nothing to alleviate the current traffic issues through the village of Henlade a village which is in desperate need to be by-passed. Air quality along parts of this route are some of the worst in the whole of Taunton Deane.

HE's own figures produced in the TAR predict a minimal reduction in traffic through

Henlade and onto junction 25.

Due to the nature of the current road system in this part of Somerset there is great concern about the connectivity between outlying communities. The current road structure, away from the A358 is generally single track with passing places and unsuitable for heavy vehicles. There is great concern that larger vehicles; oil delivery, feed delivery, milk collections and the like will be adversely affected by the limited access to these small communities. Any peak time hold ups, road closures, accidents or road works would cause many of these minor roads to become "rat runs" for traffic seeking alternative routes. The minor roads affected by traffic seeking an alternative route will impact on the communities of West Hatch, Bickenhall, Slough Green, Stoke St. Mary, Meare Green, Thornfalcon, Creech St. Michael and Ruishton.

Economic Growth:

The proposed link to the new Junction on the M5 motorway, Junction 25A, effectively creates a Taunton by-pass. Therefore there is no discernable, sustainable economic development brought to the area, as this is a closed junction. Neither is there a link to the proposed new upgraded infrastructure at junction 25 or to the proposed business park, "Nexus 25". Avoiding linking to these two developments adversely impacts economic growth.

*Nowhere within the TAR do HE make the claim that this proposed route is good value for money. In fact the TAR shows this current route to offer the worst benefit to cost ratio. This does not represent taxpayers' money being spent wisely.

Environmental outcomes:

The proposed route will run along a contour of one of Taunton's most iconic features, Stoke Hill, leaving a scar across the countryside, which will be visible for miles. This is tantamount to environmental vandalism and fails HE's own test of environmental outcomes.

Two ancient woodlands will be impacted by the current proposal Huish Woods a world famous Scout Association camp site and Henlade / Stoke Hill Woods an outstanding landmark to the south east of Taunton.

We would also wish to have noted that this proposed road scheme runs through many hectares of productive, industrial farmland, which has sustained farming in the area for generations. If this proposal is enacted it may seriously affect the viability of those farms, most critically when farms are severed by the new road.

Concern has been raised on several occasions regarding flooding. Stoke Hill for instance is, in the main, made from lias clay. Lias clay has an absorption capacity, which allows rainwater to be absorbed and let out gradually. If a substantial amount of land is taken away from Stoke Hill no flood alleviation scheme could reliably attenuate the excess water and prevent Lower Henlade and Greenway Lane, marked flood areas, from becoming further inundated.

We also have considerable concerns that the new road scheme will bring new noise, light and air pollution along its route. Additionally, there will inevitably be property affected by vibration from heavy goods vehicles.

Helping cyclists, walkers and other vulnerable users of the network:

Apart from a general mention in the TAR there is no substantial information

contained therein.

Achieving real efficiency:

Without up to date traffic data and the monitoring of holiday traffic we cannot see that there is any verification that the proposed scheme would improve "efficiency".

Keeping the network in good condition:

Again there is no evidence within the TAR of maintenance.

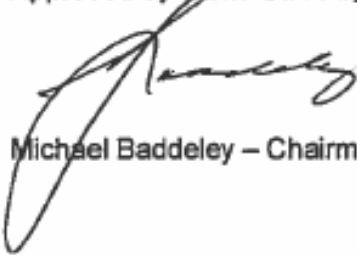
In Conclusion:

The TAR supplied by HE contains many instances of either insufficient or incorrect data that has not been updated recently. The party consulting should supply accurate and proven data to allow affected parties to consider the facts and not to guess at the meaning of inaccurate data.

As consultees we wish to express our sincere dissatisfaction with the presentation of this initial consultation. We have attended several presentation events and all recent parish meetings at which we found Highways England and Mott MacDonald staff presenting the proposal fell well short of any reasonable expectations. We found them to be generally poorly informed, disingenuous on several issues and obstructive in releasing information when purporting to be running a "transparent" consultation.

Finally, we submit that this consultation was ill-prepared and lacked significant necessary detail that made it impossible for us to make valued judgements on many issues that we feel are important to our community. We invite you to abandon this current consultation and re-run the exercise with route options, accurate and up to date information and a frank and open discourse regarding the future of this beautiful corner of our county.

Approved by Stoke St. Mary Parish Council – 13th July 2017



Michael Baddeley – Chairman

Gemma Coombes – Parish Clerk

APPENDICES

1. Letter to Secretary of State for Transport, Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling M.P.
2. Letter to Jim O'Donnell C.E.O. Highways England Ltd
3. Presentation slides by Rob Hossell

Taunton Area Cycling Campaign**Objection to A358 Expressway proposal**

Taunton Area Cycling Campaign was formed in October 2017 and has a growing membership, currently standing at around 150 people. We object to the single consultation option put forward by Highways England for the following reasons:

1. The highway strategy upon which the proposal is based, is flawed.
 - The planned capacity of this new road is vastly greater than even the projected demand. For the option on which you are consulting the forecast 2 way flow in 2038 is 26,000, well below the 32,000 theoretical capacity for a single carriageway road., showing that a dual carriageway with 64,000 capacity would be a vast over provision
 - The extra traffic it would induce in the Taunton catchment area would place significant extra traffic on the Taunton network, including on the current A358 through Henlade, to the detriment of non-motorised users, such as cyclists. See references 1 a and b below.
 - While we recognise the strategic desire for a second motorway/expressway link to the south west peninsula, none of the A358 options provides the desired network reliability to the south west, as the M5 between Taunton and the A30/A38 west of Exeter would be the single motorway route to the peninsula.
 - In the event of an incident on the M5 west of Taunton leading to the closure of one or both carriageways, the impact on local roads would be hugely detrimental, not least to cyclists. Incidents are fairly commonplace.
2. The scheme will worsen existing conditions for people walking and cycling by increasing traffic on the wider road network, with increased danger, noise and air pollution, without providing any significant traffic relief to Henlade, and thus better conditions for current, and importantly potential, walkers and cyclists. It will sever the networks of lanes and paths to the south of Taunton,

reducing the opportunities for active travel and leisure and destroying access routes into the countryside. Although the consultation refers to a 'closed junction', your technical report refers to a junction option with spur roads, which would be highly destructive. There are even doubts as to whether this can be fitted into the space available.

3. The existing scheme cost of £380m and Benefit Cost Ratio of less than 2 is unacceptable. It is the option with the worst benefit-cost ratio of those included in the technical report. It is probable that costs will rise significantly. The National Audit Office has recently reported that the roads programme is unaffordable (2). A quality cycling network could be constructed in Taunton at a fraction of this cost, and would bring huge health and traffic function benefits, with vastly better benefit-cost ratios than this scheme offers. The proposal also appears to work in conflict with the current proposal to invest in extra capacity at J25.

4. By stoking traffic growth, the scheme will undermine CO₂ reduction targets.

5. Locally the scheme is hugely damaging, destroying a unique and peaceful area of countryside, blighting villages, hamlets and woodland areas.

6. We do not object to a more limited by-pass to Henlade, to relieve that community of the burden of motor traffic currently passing through it. The proposed scheme offers little relief to Henlade. A genuine Henlade bypass connecting to J25 would offer much better value all round, as it would link with the park and ride site for Taunton bound traffic.

7. We also recognise that the junctions and crossings of the current A358 between Henlade and Southfields are unsafe for all road users, and that grade separated crossings, roundabouts etc could be implemented on the current alignment to greatly improve safety and flow for all road users along and across the A358. Retaining an improved single carriageway road with a Henlade bypass to J25 would be vastly less costly, provide some increased capacity in conjunction with the planned J25 roundabout improvements, but not such as to induce large quantities of additional motor traffic to the detriment of Taunton.

8. Notwithstanding this objection, if the scheme does proceed, with the current proposed route or other options, we would expect IAN195 to be applied in full. The A358 is effectively unusable by cyclists at present, and difficult to cross throughout the length between Southfields and Taunton Gateway park and ride.

A cycletrack should be provided alongside the A358, also in accordance with IAN 195. Improved pedestrian/cycling crossings are needed at the following crossing points: Nags Head, Lipe Lane, West Hatch Lane, Bickenhill Lane (offset), Lane to Hatch Green (offset).

Yours faithfully

Ian Bright

For Taunton Area Cycling Campaign

1. Evidence that new Trunk Road induce additional traffic

a. SACTRA report for DfT 1994

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/economics/rdg/nataarchivedocs/trunkroadstraffic.pdf>

b. 'The End of the Road' -review of impacts of new roads by CPRE March 2017

file:///C:/Users/mikewg/Downloads/TheZendZofZtheZroad.pdf

2 Roads plan undeliverable – NAO

ROADS

Andrew Forster, Local Transport Today

31 March 2017

The DfT will have to cancel or delay the delivery of many road schemes in the first Road Investment Strategy (RIS) because the programme is unaffordable, according to the National Audit Office.

The Government's first five year RIS, covering 2015/16-2019/20, allocated £11.4bn capital funding for the delivery of enhancements (£7.7bn) and renewals (£3.7bn) on England's trunk road and motorway network. The figure was subsequently raised to £11.9bn.

The NAO describes the first RIS as "an important step towards better long-term planning" but says it was put together in a hurry because ministers wanted it published before the 2015 General Election. The RIS was compiled in just 17 months, compared to the 30 months involved in setting the five-year funding settlements for the railways (the NAO does not mention the huge problems that have hit Network Rail's current enhancement programme, with cost overruns and project delays).

The NAO says the DfT selected the road enhancement projects "without knowing enough about whether the portfolio represented best value". "It did not integrate plans for enhancement, renewal and maintenance work, which could have saved money and reduced disruption for road users."

Of the 112 enhancement projects, 54 are scheduled to start in 2019/20, the final year of the RIS. The NAO says this will "cause significant disruption to the road network, increase prices and put pressure on resources at Highways England".

The DfT is reviewing the plan. "The Department has not yet decided how it will change the delivery schedule," says the NAO. "So far, Highways England has also developed options to bring forward the start dates of up to ten projects and to push back the start dates of up to 19 projects into the first years of road period 2.

"The Department and Highways England currently expect that this will not significantly delay delivery of the expected benefits to road users."

Highways England (HE) has identified 16 of the 112 enhancement projects as being at risk of not delivering value for money. The HE and DfT are exploring options for these schemes such as "revising project design, merging projects on the same stretch of road, cancelling projects and delaying projects to enable further assessment of benefits".

The NAO says the Department "did not make it sufficiently clear when it announced the Road Investment Strategy that the 112 enhancement projects could be subject to change or cancellation".

"Because the majority of projects were at a very early stage of development, there was significant uncertainty about their affordability, deliverability and potential benefits relative to costs, with the potential to bring these commitments into doubt.

"By giving the impression that it had made a firm commitment to deliver the 112 projects, the Department may find it more difficult to cancel, delay or modify them."

The RIS was deliberately overprogrammed from the start to a value of £652m. By last September the programme's value exceeded the increased budget of £11.9bn budget by £841m.

Money for new scheme starts may be limited in RIS2 (2020/21-2024/25) because so many of the RIS1 schemes will still be under construction. In all, road schemes from the first RIS will require £8.3bn of expenditure in the second RIS.

The NAO reports that Highways England faces challenges in recruiting the specialist resources needed to contract for and manage enhancement projects.

"Highways England plans to procure contracts for 57 major enhancement projects during 2017, compared with six in 2016, but is currently 19% below its target headcount for procurement and commercial specialists.

"Demand for these skills is high, so there is a risk that Highways England will struggle to recruit sufficient skilled staff. Highways England has been filling gaps with consultants and interim staff, but these cost on average three times more than permanent employees."

Taunton Deane Borough Council



Cllr John Williams
Leader of the Council

The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE
 Tel 01823 356555 Fax 01823 356329
 email: cllr.j.williams@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Our Ref: JRW/NP
 Your Ref:

11 July 2017

Andrew Page-Dove
 Highways England

Dear Mr Page-Dove

A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme

Please find enclosed Taunton Deane Borough Council's formal response to Highways England's non-statutory consultation on the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme.

As you are aware, the Council is a strong and long-standing advocate of the strategic improvements between the M3 and M5 providing resilience to South East / South West journeys. Our in principle support of the upgrade to the A358 to an Expressway as part of these wider improvements remains firmly in place.

That said, the non-statutory consultation is for a number of reasons very disappointing and we question whether or not it accords with Government and Highways England strategy, the single option promoted certainly does not accord with our local policies.

Our community has with considerable justification raised concerns with the fact that Highways England has only consulted on one option and the very limited material presented to support that one option. Your colleagues have said that "this is the only option which Highways England is willing and able to deliver" when questioned during recent meetings. You will see that our response highlights our concerns in light of the Planning Inspectorates guidance which highlights that *"Although optional, developers are encouraged to undertake initial consultation as soon as there is sufficient detail to allow local communities a real opportunity to influence the proposed development"*. The Council supports the view that the consultation could well be flawed.

The public rightly expect Highways England, Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council to not only work together but to collaborate on delivering coordinated, efficient and effective schemes in the public interest. You are well aware of the improvements planned to J25 being promoted by Somerset County Council and our own proposals for a Strategic Employment Site, Nexus 25. Notwithstanding the proposal set out in the non-statutory consultation, we urge you to re-engage with the County Council and ourselves to ensure we deliver a joined up, sustainable and sensible solution.

You will see that we have jointly written to you with Somerset County Council and that our responses to the non-statutory consultation are largely compatible. We wish to work with you on this vitally important project for our area and believe that as three public bodies it is essential that the public have confidence in the solutions which we are all seeking to deliver.

Visit our website www.tauntondeane.gov.uk

Whilst we are committed to working collaboratively with you, it is right that we highlight the need to discuss the provision of resources with you as part of our formal response to the consultation. You will be aware that the Council will not receive any fee income in relation to the proposal and resources directed towards responding to this project will have to be redirected from other projects.

Highways England staff have been approached to see if resources could be made available to the Council via a Planning Performance Agreement but thus far have stated that they have no ability to enter into such an arrangement – we do not believe that to be the case. Given the importance of the project to the Council and our community it is in our view important that the Council is able to properly shape the proposal and to ensure that the residents and interests of the Council are properly represented.

In our view there has clearly been a lack of coordination and governance applied to our engagement with your team. Going forward we would welcome an early meeting with you to discuss the following:

- Resources for the Council to properly and effectively participate;
- The establishment of a clear vision and set of jointly agreed objectives for the project (between Highways England, the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council) which are based on a holistic review of Government, Highways England and local Policy / Strategy; and
- A review and agreement of arrangements in relation to the governance of the project going forwards.

Yours sincerely



Cllr John Williams
Leader of the Council



Cllr Roger Habgood
Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Transportation



Andrew Goodchild
Assistant Director for Place and Energy Infrastructure



TDBC Formal Response to A358 non-statutory Consultation – July 2017

Introduction and Approach to Taunton Deane Borough Councils Response to the Non-Statutory Consultation into the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme

1. Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC / the Council) recognises that in the case of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project in England such as the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme, the Secretary of State will use the National Policy Statement for National Networks (the NPS) as the primary basis for making decisions on an application for development consent.
2. The NPS states that in accordance with section 104 of the Planning Act 2008 the Secretary of State must determine an application such as the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme in accordance with the NPS unless he/she is satisfied that to do so would *inter alia* result in adverse impacts of the development outweighing its benefits (para 1.2).
3. The Council also notes that the NPS confirms that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also likely to be an important and relevant consideration in decisions on an NSIP, but only to the extent relevant to that project (para 1.18).
4. The NPS also set out the Governments' vision and strategic objectives for National Networks. These are:

The Government will deliver national networks that meet the country's long term needs; supporting a prosperous and competitive economy and improving overall quality of life, as part of a wider transport system. This means:

- Networks with the capacity and connectivity and resilience to support national and local economic activity and facilitate growth and create jobs.
 - Networks which support and improve journey quality, reliability and safety.
 - Networks which support the delivery of environmental goals and the move to a low carbon economy.
 - Networks which join up our communities and link effectively to each other.
5. TDBC appreciates that there are many and varied aspects to a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project but ultimately its response to this project will be tested against its local policies and whether or not, in its view, the proposal meets the vision and strategic objectives set out by the Government and would "result in adverse impacts of the development outweighing its benefits".
 6. In formulating the Councils response, TDBC's Community Scrutiny Committee met on the 16th May 2017 to consider a report on the consultation. The Committee resolved that:

That Members of the Council and the Community Scrutiny Committee agreed that a letter setting out that Taunton Deane Borough Council request that Highways England not only pause the consultation but also widen the reach of

TDBC Formal Response to A358 non-statutory Consultation – July 2017



the consultation and provide the technical information which has been used to formulate the Technical Appraisal Report and the selection of the option which is being consulted on; and

That the Community Scrutiny Committee agreed that Taunton Deane Borough Council will seek to engage with Devon County Council and Somerset County Council on the strategic approach to Trunk Road improvements in the South West and that the letter from Taunton Deane Borough Council to Highways England should express the very serious concerns of the Community Scrutiny Committee and the community regarding the nature of the current consultation, specifically:

- The inappropriate timing of the consultation in relation to the planned Somerset County Council elections in May 2017 which has been exacerbated by the forthcoming General Election;
 - the very limited nature of the consultation which has made little or no attempt to engage with local Parish Councils or 'hard to reach groups'; and
 - The fact that only one option is being presented for consultation and that this option provides minimum benefit to Taunton; and
 - The detailed information – including traffic information - to support the selection of that option and the rejection of the other 3 options described in the Technical Appraisal Report, has not been made available to the Council or the community.
7. This response is based on the committee report considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee and seeks to take account of the recommendations as well as further work undertaken since the 16th May including taking into account the discussions at various Parish Council and Community events regarding the proposal.

Highways England Consultation

8. The 2008 Act requires that in advance of formal consultation, promoters consult with relevant local authorities on a Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC) and "must have regard to any response" received to ensure that the consultation is as comprehensive as possible. The Council notes that the current consultation is on an informal basis although Highways England did produce a Non-Statutory Statement of Community Consultation which was published on the 1st day of the consultation. Some initial feedback on the content of a SOCC was sought and provided in the early part of 2016 but the published version was not shared prior to the consultation beginning.
9. A preview evening was held on the 28th March to which the Council and other stakeholders were invited and 5 consultation events were due to take place as per the following table:



Date	Venue	Time
Friday 7 April	Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Chestnut View, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton TA3 6TH	10am to 6pm
Saturday 8 April	Taunton Racecourse, Orchard Portman, Taunton TA3 7BL	10am to 6pm
Monday 10 April	Holiday Inn, Deane Gate Avenue, Somerset, UK TA1 2UA	12 midday to 8pm
Tuesday 11 April	Monks Yard, Horton Cross Farm, Ilminster TA19 9PT	12 midday to 8pm
Monday 8 May	Holiday Inn, Deane Gate Avenue, Somerset, UK TA1 2UA	10am to 5pm

10. In addition to these staffed consultation events, consultation materials have been available at the following 'public information points':

Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Rd, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE
Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3XZ
Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY
South Somerset District Council, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2HT
Ilminster Meeting and Arts Centre, The Meeting House East Street, Ilminster, TA19 0AN

11. The consultation material has also been available on Highways England's website via the following link:
- <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a358-taunton-to-southfields/>
12. In addition to the events which focussed on an indicative map of the potential route option both an environmental constraints map and a Technical Appraisal Report were hosted on the website only.
13. The public were invited to submit their views via a consultation questionnaire and the website also allowed the completion of an online survey.
14. During the consultation the Government called a General Election and Highways England paused the consultation and in doing so cancelled the planned event on the 8th May. The event was re-arranged on Friday 30th June and the consultation was extended until the 16th July 2017.
15. The Council notes and welcomes that since the General Election Highways England have attended a number of Parish Council and community meetings to set out their plans and answer questions from local people.



Overall Observations on the Consultation and nature of the Material Presented

16. The consultation has been subject to some press coverage and has been advertised in local papers, the Council has not been provided with information on how and when the consultation has been or is to be advertised. It is therefore, difficult to formally assess whether or not local people and interested parties have been sufficiently made aware of the consultation, although events and meetings have been well attended. The meetings have been held in accessible locations relatively well located in terms of the proposed route and the consultation material has been made available in publically accessible locations.
17. At the beginning of the consultation the Council was concerned that Highways England have not proposed to meet with Parish Councils individually or collectively during the consultation and refused requests to attend meetings citing Purdah, the Council acknowledges that Highways England have accepted invitations to meetings since the General Election. However, the Council is concerned that Highways England have not established any form of community forum to enable wider debate (as many other large scale projects have done), have not established a presence in the area for the duration of the consultation and have made very limited attempts to meet and/or engage with 'hard to reach' groups or young people. It is likely therefore, that any responses that are received to the consultation will inevitably be skewed towards the demographic most able and likely to respond to this form and method of consultation.
18. In April 2014 Taunton Deane adopted its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out its approach to consultation and aims for the highest standard of consultation practice in accordance with TDBC's 'Core Values' which are set out in the Council's Corporate Consultation Policy. The SCI highlights the following methods of involving the community
 - Website
 - Inspection Points
 - Emails
 - Letters
 - Local News Media
 - Involve (a local electronic newsletter with a wide circulation)
 - Leaflets
 - Public Exhibitions/displays/roadshows
 - One-to-one meetings
 - Presentations
 - Questionnaires, surveys or focus groups
 - Community and resident meetings and groups
 - Interactive workshops
 - Social media
 - Councils meetings



19. Whilst Highways England have used a number of these methods of consultation the extent to which hard to reach groups have been engaged is questionable as the methods used by Highways England are the more 'traditional' methods.
20. The Council's SCI identifies and recognises that some groups are harder to engage with than others. These can include: those for whom English is not their first language, people with disabilities, children and young people, older people, gypsies and travellers, ethnic minorities, and the homeless. Such groups may not be engaged by or may be unable or unwilling to engage in traditional consultation methods. The SCI includes a list of community and voluntary organisations in Taunton Deane with links to equality and diversity groups, it is concerning that Highways England have not taken into account the methods that would be necessary to engage with these groups and it will be extremely important for them to widen their approach as part of any formal consultation. The SCI provides the starting point for the Council's response to Highways England's formal Statement of Community Consultation which will need to be produced in advance of the next stage of consultation.

Overall Observations on the Content of the Consultation Material

21. In summary, the material presented for consultation is very limited and is not of sufficient detail for the Council to form a definitive view on the proposal.
22. The notes the Technical Appraisal Report (TAR) which is available on Highways England's website and extends to 148 pages however, in reality it provides little detail on which the relative merits of the proposal can be judged. It is therefore very difficult for the Council and other interested parties to assess the relative merits of the option presented for consultation against the other options set out in the TAR. This key concern was highlighted to Highways England during a meeting on the 3rd April between the Leader, Executive Councillor, Officers and SCC and the Highways England scheme sponsor. No additional information to enable comparison has been produced to assist the Council and other interested parties in their considerations.
23. The Council notes that each of the 4 options is given an introduction, a description of the route, a description of possible junctions, structures, an assessment of compliance with highway standards, drainage and design along with a summary of benefits and a summary of issues. Each of the 4 options is then assessed via a road safety review.
24. The TAR then provides a summary of an assessment of potential environmental and social effects during construction and operation but does not provide any of the baseline information or description of the methodology of assessment. It is not possible therefore, for the Council to validate the summaries provided or conclusions reached within the TAR.



25. The fact that there is only one option presented for consultation is very concerning and suggests that the responses to the consultation will in fact have little bearing on the scheme which Highways England bring forward within the Preferred Route consultation planned for Winter 2017.
26. The Council highlights the Planning Inspectorates Advice Note 8.1 'Responding to the developer's pre-application consultation' includes information on 'non statutory consultation'. The Advice Note states:

"Although optional, developers are encouraged to undertake initial consultation as soon as there is sufficient detail to allow local communities a real opportunity to influence the proposed development.

The aim of early non-statutory consultation is to allow local communities and others to gain a better understanding of the project and its potential impacts. It also allows local communities to have their say and influence the project in its early stages. Local knowledge of the area plays an important role in the pre-application consultation and throughout the application process. Feedback received may help developers to exclude unsuitable options and minimise impacts on the local community where possible."
27. The Council is very concerned that by choosing to only consult on one option Highways England have left residents and community groups feeling that they do not have 'a real opportunity to influence the proposed development'. In this case there are no 'unsuitable options' to exclude following the provision of feedback. The Council supports the view amongst a wide range of the community that the consultation could well be flawed.
28. It is equally important and concerning that despite some introductory meetings at the end 2015 and during 2016 and one meeting at the beginning of January 2017 Council officers have had no involvement in the production of the material presented, the methodologies used to conduct the assessment and have not been party to any discussion on what assessment has been undertaken or the way in which the material has been presented.
29. Overall, the Council is of the view that the lack of engagement with it and other key parties has resulted in a consultation which could well be flawed and is based on an undeveloped evidence base. The Council urges in the strongest possible terms for Highways England to properly engage with it and other key parties before publishing information in the formal stage of consultation. The approach adopted by Highways England thus far is simply not acceptable.



Context and Government / Highways England Strategy

30. The Council notes that on 1st December 2014 the Government announced the creation of 'a dual carriageway link from the M5 at Taunton to the A303 incorporating upgraded stretches of the existing road into the strategic road network where appropriate' as part of the Autumn Statement 2014.
31. The Road Investment Strategy published on the same day in 2014 included reference to the A358 and stated that the first three sections of the M3 to M5 strategic corridor would be the 'sections at Stonehenge, Sparkford and the A358 link from the A303 to Taunton'.
32. For clarity, the Council fully supports the principle of the link between the M5 and the A303 as part of the wider M3 to M5 improvements between the South East and South West. The Council has been part of the wider group of authorities that has campaigned for these much needed improvements over a number of years.
33. More generally, the Road Investment Strategy set out aspirations including that by 2040 the Strategic Road Network would be "a better neighbour to communities, with over 90% fewer people impacted by noise from the SRN". The Strategy highlighted the 'transformational impact' of the schemes and included the following key areas of impact:
- Developing a core network of Smart Motorways and Expressways
 - Supporting the Northern Powerhouse
 - Enabling growth and housing
 - Creating better connectivity
 - Improving safety and reducing congestion
34. The Strategy also highlighted a Performance Specification which identified 8 areas which the Government will measure the SRN and Highways England over the first period of the Strategy. The 8 measures are:
- Making the network safer for our customers
 - Ensuring user satisfaction
 - Supporting the smooth flow of traffic
 - Encouraging economic growth
 - Delivering better environmental outcomes
 - Helping cyclists, walkers and vulnerable network users
 - Achieving real efficiency
 - Keeping the network in good condition
35. The Council note that under the title of encouraging economic growth measure the following description was included in the Strategy:
- "A free-flowing network is vital to helping our economy flourish. Measuring the average delay on the network is an indicator of the extent to which congestion acts as a brake on economic growth. We also want the Company to demonstrate



what it is doing to support developers, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the construction sector as a whole.”

36. The commitment to the A358 Taunton to Southfields dualling 'creating a dual carriageway link from the M5 at Taunton to the A303' was included in the DfT's Road Investment Strategy: for the 2015/16 – 2019/20 Road Period published in March 2015. Of note in relation to this project is the creation of 5 funds of £100m which were created to enable Highways England "to play its part" in delivering on the areas of:
- Environment
 - Cycling, Safety and Integration
 - Innovation
 - Air Quality
 - Growth and Housing
37. The Council notes that the creation of these funds on top of the strategic investment in road schemes recognises that Highways England should address, in the context of this scheme, air quality and growth and housing. The growth and housing fund was created to enable investment that "unlocks major housing development or key economic growth".
38. The Council reminds Highways England that the announcement on 16th March 2017 from Highways England confirmed that £4m from the Growth and Housing Fund would be spent on the Junction 25 improvement scheme to "unlock a 35-hectare local authority-led development site, with the potential to deliver up to 2,400 jobs and substantial benefits to the operation of the Strategic Road Network". For clarity and reference going forwards it is worth highlighting that the Local Development Order is promoting a site which is around 25-hectares of net developable area and for up to 4,000 jobs.
39. The Council note that in March 2017 Highways England published 'The Road to Growth: Our strategic economic growth plan'. This plan identifies 4 strategic economic roles that the SRN can play in supporting the economy:
- i. Supporting business productivity and competitiveness, and enabling the performance of SRN-reliant sectors
 - ii. Providing efficient routes to global markets through international gateways
 - iii. Stimulating and supporting the sustainable development of homes and employment spaces
 - iv. Providing employment, skills and business opportunities within our sector.
40. TDBC consider that the principles of how any scheme A358 improvement scheme between Taunton and Southfields has to take account of the context of these announcements, policies and strategies as they have emerged since 2014. The Council is particularly keen for the scheme to:
- i. Adhere to the requirements of the Governments vision and objective for this national network project to *inter alia* facilitate growth and jobs as well as delivering environmental goals and joining up and linking our communities.



In this context we consider it essential that any A358 scheme properly facilitates the Strategic Employment Site (Nexus 25), delivers environmental improvements to the village of Henlade by providing the planned for bypass and provides/maintains a sensible route into Taunton as the primary destination for journeys travelling towards Junction 25 on the A358;

- ii. Adhere to the requirements of the Road Investment Strategy to *inter alia* enable growth and create better connectivity. Again in this context we consider it essential that any A358 scheme properly facilitates the Strategic Employment Site (Nexus 25) and provides/maintains a sensible route into Taunton as the primary destination for journeys travelling towards Junction 25 on the A358;
 - iii. Deliver the Performance Specification measures of encouraging economic growth and delivering better environmental outcomes. In this context we consider it essential that any A358 scheme properly facilitates the Strategic Employment Site (Nexus 25), delivers environmental improvements to the village of Henlade by providing the planned for bypass;
41. The Council consider it important to highlight that these outcomes have not been thought about since the recent consultation has been launched. TDBC and its partners including Highways England and Somerset County Council have been signatories to a Memorandum of Understanding relating to the Strategic Employment site at Junction 25 since October 2015. The purpose of the MOU is to *"promote effective co-ordination and co-operation between the MOU partners (which are Taunton Deane Borough Council, Somerset County Council, Highways England, Environment Agency, Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd and Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership) to secure the delivery of the proposed strategic employment site adjacent to Junction 25 of the M5 (Taunton), taking full account of the dependence on the highway infrastructure improvements required to unlock the site"*.
 42. Equally the provision of a Henlade Bypass is not a new concept or objective. TDBC's Core Strategy which was adopted in 2012 and was the culmination of 6 years work (which formally involved Highways England / the Highways Agency) set a very clear objective of bypassing the village as part of the A303/A358 improvements. Policy SP2 'Realising the Vision for Taunton' supports the provision of:

"...a Henlade Bypass, traffic calming and improved junctions as part of A303/A358 improvement package..." as part of the infrastructure provision which would help the Town to realise its potential.
 43. Overall the Council is very concerned that the proposed route does not adhere to Government or Highways England's own strategy.
 44. The Council urges Highways England to urgently establish with TDBC and other key partners including Somerset County Council a clear vision and set of jointly agreed objectives for the project which are based on a holistic review of Government, Highways England and local Policy / Strategy.



Observations on the Proposed Route

45. Highways England's website sets out a wide variety of information on the A358 scheme including a section entitled 'why we need this scheme' which includes the aims of the scheme, these are:
- reduce congestion, improve journey times and make our network safer for our customers
 - support jobs and economic growth at a local and national level
 - minimise adverse impacts on the surrounding natural environment and landscape
46. Taking into account these aims, the information which is presented in the Technical Appraisal Report and other linear and road schemes which have been the subject to DCO applications and Examinations, the Councils response will cover the following areas:
- Strategic fit with the Growth of Taunton including the proposed new M5 junction
 - Access to the Nexus 25 strategic employment site and relationship with J25
 - Transport and Traffic Implications including Design and Engineering
 - Economic Impacts including opportunities for local businesses and people
 - Landscape and Visual
 - Air Quality and Emissions
 - Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
 - Bio Diversity and Ecology
 - Noise and Vibration
 - Flooding
 - Community Impacts
47. The Council notes that the NPS at paragraph 5.2 very clearly states the need to work with statutory environmental bodies at an early stage and is concerned that this does not appear to have taken place prior to the publication of the consultation material. Paragraph 5.2 states:
- "Sufficient relevant information is crucial to good decision-taking, particularly where formal assessments are required (such as Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment). To avoid delay, applications should discuss what information is needed with statutory bodies as early as possible".
- Strategic fit with the Growth of Taunton including the proposed new M5 Junction**
48. The Council welcomes and supports the principle of improvements to the A358 between Taunton and Southfields. The economic benefit for the wider south west



- peninsula is well established and the Council is pleased that Highways England is bringing forward plans for improvements following Government's announcements in 2014. The improvement of the A358 should provide important improvements to the accessibility of Taunton as a high quality multi-functional sub-regional service centre and thereby further enhance its attractiveness and success.
49. In terms of the Council's existing statutory planning policy, Taunton Deane Core Strategy Policy SP2 'Realising the Vision for Taunton' supports the provision of: "...a Henlade Bypass, traffic calming and improved junctions as part of A303/A358 improvement package..." as part of the infrastructure provision which would help the Town to realise its potential.
 50. The growth of Taunton as a Garden Town, including the development of the Nexus 25 strategic employment site adjacent to J25, will also give rise to an increase in traffic, for which an improved trunk road will provide welcome additional capacity.
 51. The new 'all movements' motorway junction proposed 2.5km south of M5 J25 at the western end of the new, offline section of the A358. The consultation does not show or provide any access except between the M5 and the A358 as part of this scheme. The Council would be very concerned if any provision for access beyond this (i.e. to the local highway network) were to be made at the new M5 junction in this location. Killams Avenue (which at this point has the character of a narrow country lane) runs close to the motorway boundary at the point indicated for the new junction, before crossing the M5 on a bridge. If there were found to be insufficient space to construct the new junction without severing Killams Avenue, it would be necessary to re-route it around the junction to cross the M5, if necessary on a re-located bridge. If Killams Avenue were to be connected via the new motorway junction roundabout, an additional (and very unsatisfactory) route into Taunton from the M5 would have been created which, whilst being attractive to motorists (forming an unacceptable rat run), would access the town centre through a series of residential roads entirely unsuited to the very substantial increase in through traffic which would arise.
 52. Improved access via a new M5 junction into Taunton is not envisaged or necessarily required within the existing Core Strategy to accommodate planned growth. However, the capacity of J25 is of concern and the Council is supportive of Somerset County Councils proposals to improve the capacity at this junction. An additional junction on the M5 facilitating a 2nd good quality access into Taunton is something which, in the long term, would help to alleviate routes within the town providing access to the M5. However, the broad location of the new junction would not serve this purpose well. As above Killams Avenue is not a suitable, good quality route for high volumes of traffic and additional road infrastructure to access the town centre from this broad location would undoubtedly conflict with the Vivary Green Wedge, in short this could not be in a more sensitive location for our community which clearly conflicts with the very basis of the Council's Core Strategy.



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53. The Council proposes that Highways England, Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council work in partnership to investigate the implications of this junction and crucially jointly explore the options and merits of a new junction on the M5 which provides not only an efficient and effect means of accessing the A358 but also a means of efficiently and effectively accessing Taunton and its surrounds to the west of the M5. The objective of this work would be to ensure that the considerable investment which Highways England are making to the Strategic Road Network would enable the long term sustainable economic growth of Taunton beyond the current Plan period.
54. Indicatively, the Council believes that the provision of a 2nd M5 junction (Junction 25a) further to the south west would better serve the long term needs of Taunton beyond the current Local Plan period. Subject to further investigation and assessment described above, the Council would prefer a new all movements junction on the M5 (Junction 25a) alongside a connection from the new A358 back into Junction 25 at the roundabout which will provide access into Nexus 25. This would not only provide a 2nd M5 junction (Junction 25a) for Taunton but would also vitally provide a bypass for Henlade which the vast majority of traffic would use.
55. Another matter of concern relating to the new junction, is the existence of planning consent for residential development immediately to the north of Killams Avenue adjacent to the site of the proposed motorway junction (see planning applications 38/12/02030a and 38/15/0177: Killams Drive, Taunton). The Council would question the location as shown within the consultation document in terms of whether or not it would fit alongside the approved development.

Access to the Nexus 25 strategic employment site and relationship with J25

56. The issue of most concern to the Council is how the A358 scheme relates to the Nexus 25 strategic employment site proposal. It had been the hope and expectation of the Council that a direct connection from the new alignment of the A358 to the Nexus 25 site would be provided. The Council has been preparing a Local Development Order for the Nexus 25 site and the County Council have recently submitted a planning application for improvements to J25 (which Highways England are part funding) both of which include provision for a dual carriageway between J25 and the roundabout into the Nexus 25 site which has been designed to facilitate connection to the new A358. Government and Highways England consistently reference the need to encourage economic growth, it is not clear how the scheme as proposed will do this and as such it seems to conflict with National and local policy.
57. The effect of the new road not connecting into J25 is that traffic accessing Nexus 25 from the A358 approaching from the east would have a choice of either continuing past the site to the new M5 J25a and then accessing the site via J25, an additional journey distance of approximately 4km, or using the former alignment of the A358 through Henlade. Unfortunately, the consultation material provides very limited information and it is not possible to assess the likely route which traffic will take or assess the detailed implications for Nexus 25.



58. The Council proposes that Highways England, Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council work in partnership to ensure that the A358 improvement scheme provides an effective and efficient relationship between J25, Nexus 25 and the A358 scheme.

Transport and Traffic Implications including Design and Engineering (this section has been produced in the main by Somerset County Council)

59. The County Council have highlighted that one of their key objectives is for traffic on the existing A358 through Henlade to be reduced as much as possible, particularly to:
- Reduce environmental (air quality and congestion) impacts of traffic flow through Henlade which is an Air Quality Management Area;
 - enable sufficient capacity for development of a new strategic employment site next to Junction 25; and
 - reduce congestion and delay at Junction 25
60. The Council would add, in accordance with well-established Core Strategy policy, that the improvements to the A358 should include a bypass for Henlade which the vast majority of traffic will use and highlights that both the Council and the County Council have provided for this within their separate but inter-related proposals at Nexus 25 and at Junction 25 (respectively).
61. It will be important therefore for Highways England to consider including measures in the DCO which encourage traffic to use the new route rather than the current A358 through Henlade, including consideration of physical works on the existing A358 to further reduce traffic using that route, and alterations to the A358 junction with the A378 to encourage A378 traffic to use the new road.
62. Traffic modelling produced to support the Local Development Order being prepared for the Strategic Employment Site (Nexus 25) shows that in 2018 in the PM Peak hour approximately 22% of traffic travelling from Southfields to Taunton will go south onto the M5 at J25, 30% will go north on the M5 and importantly 47% will go into Taunton (the figures are rounded). It is vitally important therefore, that any improvements to the A358 continues to provide safe and convenient access into Taunton. Unfortunately, the information within the TAR is not detailed enough to enable a proper assessment of whether this will be the case.
63. In addition to the proposed all-movement M5 Junction '25a'; two further all movement grade separated junctions are proposed along the route. These will enable access from the local road network at West Hatch Lane to enable interchange with the existing A358 and A378; and at Ashill to provide access to communities near Ashill and Ilton. An at-grade connection would be provided to the Southfields Roundabout with the A303, although local improvements may be required at that junction.



64. The proposed junction strategy for the online section of the improvements significantly reduces opportunities for local traffic to access the A358 compared to the current provision, and this will inevitably increase the volume of local traffic travelling along less-suitable local roads to reach an access point onto the new road; which may have significant environmental impact on communities along those routes.
65. The Council notes with concern that the TAR compares the benefits of the four scheme options considered by Highways England prior to choosing a single option for consultation, and the chosen scheme would appear to offer the lowest transport benefits of the options considered. Further information has been requested in order to fully understand the performance of the proposed scheme compared to other options considered in terms of reducing congestion and delay on the network.
66. The chosen scheme (Option 8 + NFS) would appear, according to Table 0.1, to offer the lowest transport benefits of the options considered including a safety dis-benefit. Further information has been requested in order to fully understand the performance of the proposed scheme compared to other options considered in terms of network congestion, delay and safety.
67. Table 0.1 appears to conclude that Option 2A/2B has the greatest quantified transport benefits particularly in terms of journey time and safety benefits. Whilst it is costed as being significantly more expensive than the other options it is assessed as having the greatest value for money at this early appraisal stage. This appears to indicate that option 2A/2B performs much better than Option 8 + NFS in traffic and transport terms.
68. Initial indicative layouts for junctions, possible designs for changes to side roads, and implications for rights of way are referred to in the technical report. A number of design and safety related issues have already been identified by Highways England for each of the four routes they have considered through their initial safety review.
69. Whilst it is recognised that the design proposals are still at a very early stage in the development process, it will be necessary for further information to be made available to the Councils in due course in order for us to fully assess the preferred route proposal once chosen. It will be important for the Councils to engage with Highways England to provide detailed observations on their designs for the preferred route, at an appropriate stage in the design process, to ensure connections and interfaces with the local road network and rights of way network maintain appropriate standards of access and safety; and to ensure appropriate mitigation for any adverse impacts or indeed betterment where possible.
70. In addition to the limited traffic information set out in the TAR, Highways England has supplied SCC with a diagram showing forecast traffic flows at key locations on the network for the single consultation option 8/8B + NFS, although it does not appear to have been made available on Highways England's website and has not been included in any of the consultation material.



71. This shows that the proposed scheme is predicted to reduce annual average daily traffic on the existing A358 at Henlade by 4,000 vehicles in 2038 when compared to current (2015) flows, and that taking account of predicted traffic growth, the scheme results in 12,900 fewer vehicles travelling through Henlade in 2038 than there would otherwise have been. There are predicted to be a similar number of vehicles using the new road and the 'old road' through Henlade (about 26,000 on each road) in 2038. The Council would like to see traffic using the existing A358 through Henlade reduced to its design capacity of no more than 17,000 vehicles.
72. The diagram also shows that the improvement scheme as a whole attracts some 15,000 additional daily trips to the A358 route in 2038 (comparing the forecast 2038 'do-minimum' flow of 33,200 just west of Southfields junction with the 'do-something' flow of 48,000).
73. The diagram shows that traffic on some of the key local roads running parallel to the proposed 'online' section of improvement will increase significantly (e.g. an increase from 300 to 700 vehicles per day on the link between Hatch Beauchamp and the new West Hatch Lane junction). This information would seem to indicate that 400 vehicles per day would therefore, be prevented from accessing the A358 and would be redirected / forced to use these local roads. This severance is not highlighted effectively within the consultation material and raises concerns about the use of unsuitable lanes to carry significant additional traffic in order for local people to access the A358.
74. An operational assessment of Junction 25 in the year 2038 (using Somerset County Council's proposed Junction 25 improvement layout) has been carried out by Highways England for the options both with and without a Junction 25 link. This showed that with the junction improvement the junction would operate at around 85% saturation in both the AM and PM peak periods either with or without the Junction 25 link. (85% saturation in traffic signal junctions is the point at which the junction still operates effectively but any further traffic load will start to cause congestion and delay).
75. All options will remove traffic to M5 South from Junction 25 whilst for options without the link road the majority of traffic to Taunton and M5 North will still pass through Junction 25 via the old A358. This explains why there is not much difference in the operation of Junction 25 between the options.
76. For Option 8/8B+NFS an analysis of the operational performance of the proposed new all movements M5 Junction '25a' was assessed. This showed that for peak period design year 2038 traffic forecasts that the junction would operate at about 45% of its potential capacity for both peak periods.
77. The traffic assessment undertaken represents a neutral month weekday (in accordance with Department for Transport guidance), rather than when peak traffic occurs on Fridays, weekends and bank holidays due to weekly commuting and holiday traffic. Further modelling of the weekends and holiday periods will be considered in the next stage of scheme development as poor performance of



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the current road during these times was one of the key reasons for the investment in improvements.

78. There are many Public Rights of Ways (PRoWs) and restricted byways, undesignated paths and cycle routes situated within the vicinity of all scheme options, a number of which have been severed by the construction of the existing A358, A303 and M5 roads. Crossings suitable for non- motorised users (NMU) are not common features in the area. It will be important that appropriate connections are provided along the length of the route.
79. Overall in Traffic and Transport terms it is recommended that at this stage in the process the overall need for the dual carriageway improvement is strongly supported but that a number of significant issues and potential impacts associated with the proposed route are highlighted to Highways England so that appropriate further technical justification, amendments to the proposals and appropriate mitigations can be considered prior to publishing a preferred route; taking into account community and stakeholder feedback from the consultation process along with appropriate technical appraisals. It is strongly encouraged that Highways England, Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council work in partnership so that all relevant issues can be taken into account.

Economic Impacts including opportunities for local businesses and people

80. The Council has two major concerns with the proposal from a local economic impact perspective. Firstly, any improvement must continue to provide a safe and convenient access into Taunton via the A358. As above 50% of the west bound traffic on the A358 to Taunton traffic goes into Taunton and the interchange between the M5 and A358 is one of the reasons why Taunton is an attractive place to do business. Any 'improvement' which makes it less convenient to access Taunton cannot be supported especially given the regional significance of Taunton, its planned growth and its status as a Garden Town.
81. Secondly, and a key part of Taunton's sustainable growth, is Nexus 25 which is being promoted by a Local Development Order and will create space for up to 4,000 new jobs for the town and the wider economy. In the same way in which the A358 provides access into Taunton, the ethos of Nexus 25 is that it lies on the strategic connection of the M5 and the A358. Indicative traffic modelling for the LDO indicates that approximately 21% or one fifth of traffic inbound to Nexus 25 in the AM peak hour is expected to have used the A358 from Southfields and the same percentage of outbound traffic from Nexus 25 in the PM peak is expected to use the A358 to travel towards Southfields. Similarly therefore, any 'improvement' which makes it less convenient to access Nexus 25 from the A358 is of significant concern, especially as this indicatively could result in additional traffic from Nexus 25 choosing to use the existing A358 through Henlade which is not desirable or envisaged.
82. The Council would support the communities concerns that the existing A358 through Henlade would remain an attractive/default route for traffic even if the M5/J25a/improved A358 route provides a credible alternative. The Council indicatively consider that the provision of a junction further to the south west



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would better serve the long term needs of Taunton beyond the current Local Plan period. Subject to further investigation and assessment described above, the Council would prefer to see a connection from the new A358 back into Junction 25 at the roundabout which will provide access into Nexus 25. This would not only provide a 2nd M5 junction for Taunton but would also vitally provide a bypass for Henlade which the vast majority of traffic would use.

83. Highways England have recently published 'The Road to Growth' which sets out its role in providing employment, skills and business opportunities. Unfortunately there is nothing within the consultation material or supporting documents which sets out how local businesses and local people might benefit from the A358 scheme. Given the significance of the investment and the commitments set out within 'The Road to Growth' the Council would expect Highways England to set out clearly how it proposes the following:
- To support local companies to individually and collectively ensure that they are well placed to access supply chain opportunities in relation to the project
 - To support local people, local colleges and training providers to promote careers and importantly to enable people to obtain the qualifications and skills to ensure they are well placed to gain employment opportunities in relation to the project and the supply chain including but not limited to apprentices.
 - To ensure in any event that through the procurement process contractors engaged in the delivery of the project:
 - Provide apprenticeship placements, proportionate to the type of work and workforce required for local people.
 - Provide a proportionate number of employment opportunities for long-term unemployed local people.
 - Maximise opportunities for the sub-contracting of local SMEs.

Landscape and Visual

84. The Council notes that the NPS requires that "projects need to be designed carefully, taking into account the potential impact on the landscape. Having regard to siting, operational and other relevant constraints, the aim should be to avoid or minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate" (para 5.149). The NPS also clearly states at para 5.144 that "the applicant's assessment should also take account of any relevant policies based on these (landscape and visual) assessments in local development documents in England".
85. The TAR report acknowledges that there is a significant wealth of assets with designated environmental status near the four routes including landscape, ecological and historical features.
86. The Council assumes that a landscape and Visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been carried out to assess the landscape impact of the various routes but there is no reference to such an assessment and the methodology used for any such assessment has not be shared or agreed with the Council. The Council



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would have expected to see a map showing the zone of theoretical visibility and a map showing the various viewpoints used for assessing each route. It is therefore unclear how conclusions on landscape impact have been made.

87. The preferred scheme area passes through four identified National landscape character regions within the districts of Taunton Deane and South Somerset (National Character Areas (NCA): 143 Mid Somerset Hills, 140 Yeovil Scarplands, 147 Blackdowns and 146 Vale of Taunton and Quantock Ridges.
88. However no mention is made to local landscape character areas. In Taunton Deane these are 1a Farmed and Settled Low vale-Vale of taunton Deane 4a Farmed and Wooded Lias vale -Fivehead Vale and part of 5a Sandstone ridge -North Curry.
89. The route passes very close to the nationally protected landscape, the Blackdown hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) the boundary of which is which usefully shown on the constraints map.
90. There is reference to the two long distance footpaths (East Deane way and Neroche Herepath) that will be affected by the preferred road route but these recreation routes are not shown on plan. The report acknowledges the importance of Stoke Hill as a prominent landscape feature in the area but fails to mention Thom Clump SLF. (Special landscape Feature).
91. Although there is no specific landscape legislation, reference and consideration should be made and given to the European landscape Convention which the UK signed up to in 2006. It is considered that the National parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 should also be taken into account. When listing local relevant policies in Taunton Deane district, CP8 policy which states that the council will conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment should also be considered. There is no mention in the report of the councils' green wedge at Vivary and Cotlake Hill or the Special landscape feature (SLF) of Thom clump at Henlade
92. All four proposed route options would traverse the agricultural landscape between Taunton in the west and Ilminster in the east.
93. One of the options (1/1B+NFS) within the TAR which is the furthest away from the existing A358 corridor being within an otherwise agricultural and tranquil environment would lead to a more notable change than those routes near the existing A358 corridor. This option would also be set at the base of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which rise to the south. Existing far reaching views of and from the AONB would be disrupted by the presence of the new route. This route has great landscape and biodiversity impact and so it is agreed that this should not be the preferred route.
94. On the lowland plain, the visibility of the Options 8/8B + NFS (the preferred route) and Option 8/8B + Jct25 may be limited by intervening vegetation, but the schemes would still be visible from the adjacent Blackdown Hills AONB. The provision of junctions at West Hatch and Ashill would increase the level of



disturbance, as would the upgrading of part of the existing A358 and the construction of the new link over the lowland plain connecting to the motorway. This route also encroaches slightly on the lower slopes of Stoke Hill possibly resulting in cutting into the hillside, and would also result in the destruction of some woodland at Huish woods, the Scout Camp is of international renown and this would have an unacceptable adverse effect. Subject to further information the Council consider that this is unacceptable and that a different route alignment is required.

95. The preferred route 8-8B+NFS would also be visible from local visual receptors along the A358 and from the proposed housing extension in the Killams area of Taunton. The Council's view is that the new M5 junction should be located further to the southwest along the M5 which may alleviate this impact.
96. Option 2A/2B would have the less landscape impact being in the most part either passing in close proximity to the existing A358, however this option would be visible from local visual receptors such as residential properties close to the route.

Air Quality and Emissions

97. The Council highlights the importance of Air Quality within the NPS and notes with interest that the Secretary of State "must give air quality considerations substantial weight" (para 5.12). The NPS also highlights that air quality will be of particular relevance where development is "within or adjacent to Air Quality Management Areas..."
98. The Council notes that the TAR states that "The air quality appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG) unit A3 chapter 3. Net present values (NPV) have been calculated for both local and regional changes in air quality."
99. The report states that "All options show local improvements in ambient air quality due to reduced congestion on the affected road network. This is balanced against predicted regional increases in emissions due to overall traffic growth. For Option 2A/2B, the regional increases outweigh the local improvements, resulting in a small dis-benefit for this option with small benefits for the other options. All options have the potential to decrease noise in local residential areas, apart from option 8 NFS which has the potential to increase noise in local residential areas. These are represented by benefits in the quantitative appraisal, except for option 8 NFS which shows a dis-benefit".
100. It is not possible for the Council to comment on the accuracy of the figures or assumptions made during the assessments as there is no data provided with the report. There are no details of existing and potential air quality, noise levels or traffic levels.
101. The TAG document that is referred to in the Report outlines how the assessment compares the existing noise/air quality to the levels that could be expected with a proposed new road. It is based on predictions of traffic levels and a number of



other assumptions. There is also no discussion or comment on the results, what factors may affect the air quality or noise levels or any mitigation that could be used.

102. There is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) on the A358 in Henlade which was declared due to high levels of nitrogen dioxide. This is due to the high levels of road traffic and the residential buildings being close to the road. It is likely that a road by-passing Henlade would reduce traffic and also the levels of pollutants on the existing A358. The Report does not include details of the changes in traffic levels on the existing A358 in Henlade due to each proposal, however, there is an estimate of the traffic levels on the new stretch of the A358 to the east of the existing A358 (Section 6.2)
- Option 1 + NFS (31,700 2 way flow in 2038),
 - Option 8/8B + Junction 25 (45,900 2 way flow in 2038)
 - Option 8/8B + NFS (26,000 2 way flow in 2038).
 - Option 2A/2B scheme attracts the most traffic to the new A358 (54,600 2 way flow in 2038), with the majority of this traffic (73%) accessing the M5 and Taunton via the new link to Junction 25, the remainder (27%) using the new free flow slip roads with the M5 to travel south on the M5.
103. Option 2A/2B has the highest flow of traffic on the new stretch of A358 and so this would indicate that it would result in the lowest levels of traffic on the existing A358 through Henlade. This is backed up by the statement that 73% of the traffic would be using the link to Junction 25 to access Taunton and the M5 north, and so for the other options without the link to Junction 25 a lot of this traffic would be using the existing A358.
104. Without any calculation or explanation of the results it can only be assumed that any improvements due to reduction of traffic on the A358 in Henlade are outweighed by increases in air pollution at other properties. It may be that Option 2A/2B passes closer to houses than the other three options which pass through more rural areas. Even so, it would be surprising if the new road was closer to houses than the existing A358 in Henlade.
105. The Council has been producing Action Plans with the aim to improve air quality in the AQMAs, however, as the pollution is due to road traffic on a main road the Council is very limited in what it can do. It is likely that the only way to meet air quality standards at Henlade is to provide a by-pass to remove most of the traffic from the road.
106. Therefore, further detail should be provided on how a proposal that removes the most traffic from the built up area of the A358 at Henlade leads to a dis-benefit in overall air quality.
107. In summary, there is not enough information on air quality or noise in the Appraisal Report to allow a full comment or view on these issues. The report does not provide detail or an explanation of how each route may affect certain areas, there is no explanation as to why the options that result in dis-benefit to



noise and to air quality are different, when both are based on traffic flows. There is no explanation as to how the option that removes the most traffic from the A358 through Henlade results in a dis-benefit for air quality. The new road should have a quiet road surface and appropriate mitigation.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

108. The Council highlight that Poundisford Park Pale Scheduled Monument and Poundisford Park Grade II Registered Park and Garden are located within 300m of Option 1 + NFS. There is a Cross in St. Aldhelm and St. Eadburga churchyard Scheduled Monument within 1km of Options 2A/2B, 8 + NFS and 8 + Jct25.
109. There are many listed buildings within the 1km of all four scheme options, consisting of Grade I, Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings; and many records of archaeological events and finds within 1km of the proposed options, many of which run along the existing A358.
110. The heritage section of the consultation document is poor and while it mentions archaeology, the impact on historic buildings and heritage assets is not considered in any detail. Historic England has now produced its replacement for the PPS5 Practice Guidance. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' needs to be specifically referred to as well as the considerations set out in the NPS and NPPF. Highways England need to produce a Statement of Historic Significance.

Bio Diversity and Ecology

111. The TAR report acknowledges that there is a significant wealth of assets with designated environmental status near all four routes and shows these on the constraints map. A smaller scale map showing the location of the SACS (Hestercombe, Bracket's Coppice, Exmoor and Quantock Oakwoods and Beer Quarry and caves (all designated for bat populations) would be useful.
112. It appears that , Option 1/1B + NFS was ruled out as it was anticipated to have a Large Adverse effect on the protected site Thurlbear Wood and Quarrylands Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and designated ancient woodland located 100m east and downstream of the option centreline.
113. The proposed works for all options would impact on habitats potentially resulting in permanent loss of habitats of high to medium conservation value. The report states that the habitats have been surveyed but due to the large area covered by the route there is no plan showing all habitat types listed within the Somerset LBAP and Taunton Deane LBAP, including hedgerows and standing water.
114. It is not clear at this stage what the impacts may be. These impacts may include, but are not limited to habitat removal and fragmentation, disturbance, air pollution, noise and vibration, which will adversely reduce the integrity of the protected sites.

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115. The report states that protected, including European protected species will be affected by the new road but does not discuss any detail. Full field surveys are required to assess the impact the preferred route would have on protected sites and protected species. It is understood that these surveys are currently taking place.
116. The report lists all legislation relevant to biodiversity on p45. However I consider that the National parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 should also be listed. When listing local relevant policies in Taunton Deane district CP8 should also be listed.
117. The preferred route Option 8/8B + NFS mainly tries to avoid the protected sites but it is considered it comes too close to the mapped ancient woodland leaving no buffer. At Huish woods near Ashe farm it appears as though the woodland will be directly impacted upon. There will also be a moderate effect on South Taunton Streams Local Nature Reserve (LNR) near Killams in Taunton. We know from our species occurrence mapping that dormice are likely to be a particular issue at Killams and on the lower slopes of Stoke hill near Arundells farm.

Noise and Vibration

118. The TAR states that “The noise appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with TAG unit A3 chapter 2. Net present values (NPV) have been calculated for changes in noise, amenity and several specific health issues. To derive the NPVs, calculated values for each house within the respective option study areas required independent entries in the WebTAG Noise Worksheets for ‘with’ and ‘without’ scheme in both opening and design years”.
119. As with air quality the assessment finds a benefit with three of the proposals, but a dis-benefit with one of them, in this case Option 8+ NFS, Again, there is no supporting information or comment on these figures. The calculations would be based on changes in traffic flows and how noise levels will change at properties with the proposed roads.
120. For both noise and air quality there is no information on which areas will be adversely affected by noise and which will benefit. Also, as both are a result of changes in road traffic, there is no comment on why one option results in a disbenefit for noise whereas a different option gives a disbenefit for air quality.
121. All of the proposals will result in an increase in traffic on the A358 due to traffic diverting to the new road from the A303/A30 over the Blackdown Hills. However, there is no information in the report on the potential increase in road traffic levels.
122. Any new road should be built using a quiet road surface, as reducing noise at source is normally more effective than trying to deal with noise after it has been generated. Noise mitigation such as barriers should be used where needed.
123. In summary, there is not enough information on air quality or noise in the Appraisal Report to allow a full comment or view on these issues. The report does not provide detail or an explanation of how each route may affect certain



areas, there is no explanation as to why the options that result in dis-benefit to noise and to air quality are different, when both are based on traffic flows. There is no explanation as to how the option that removes the most traffic from the A358 through Henlade results in a dis-benefit for air quality. There is also no information on the effect of noise from the new grade separated junction on the M5 on the Killams area of Taunton and which could be significant if the new junction is located over/elevated above the M5.

Flooding (comments from SCC)

124. The four scheme options are partially situated within Flood Zones 2 and 3. There are areas within the study area at risk of flooding from surface water, particularly along the existing A358 within areas identified as Flood Zones 2 and 3.
125. Detailed proposals for drainage and flood risk management are not set out in the consultation documents and the Council will require further information on those matters in order to agree that any temporary proposals and permanent solutions have adequately considered all flood risk and drainage considerations, including how the drainage system will function once it is constructed. It will be imperative to ensure that this scheme does not increase the flood risk in other areas.

Community Impacts

126. Many of the issues which will directly impact on the communities along the existing and proposed A358, including those in the Killams area of Taunton, are dealt with within the paragraphs above clearly transport (ease of movement and access, severance and rights of way), air quality, noise and landscape impacts will affect residents and communities in a significant way.
127. In accordance with the NPS it will be important for Highways England to properly consider the impacts on all of the affected communities and provide bespoke mitigation to an appropriate standard once a scheme is selected. This should not just take into account the individual impacts but the cumulative effects from all impacts on communities.
128. A significant and arguably the most concerning issue with the consultation is the lack of information to properly assess the impact on Henlade and particularly whether the proposed route will result in significant traffic reduction travelling along the existing A358 through the community. Clearly unless the new A358 provides a convenient and preferable access to Taunton and Nexus 25 then there is a considerable risk that existing and new users will continue to use the existing A358. This would be unacceptable for a number of important reasons. The Council considers it essential that Highways England works with Taunton Deane and Somerset County Council to ensure that any preferred route provides convincing and evidenced information to ensure that significant levels of traffic are taken off the existing A358 through Henlade. The Council would like to see traffic using the existing A358 through Henlade reduced to its design capacity of no more than 17,000 vehicles.



Overall conclusion

129. The Council remains committed and completely supportive of the delivery of improvements to the A358 as part of the Road Investment Strategy scheme to improve the access to the South West along the M3, A303, A358 and M5 corridor.
130. Notwithstanding this commitment and support, there are significant concerns with the proposal which has been presented by Highways England. There has been little, if any, proper engagement with the Council regarding the development of the proposal. The material presented is not of sufficient detail to enable the Council to properly assess the impacts of the proposal and to alleviate its concerns or the concerns of residents regarding important aspects of the scheme.
131. The Council encourages Highways England in the strongest possible terms to set out how it will engage and to commit to properly engage with the Council and other statutory bodies (particularly Somerset County Council) prior to the production of material to support the 'preferred route' due to be announced in Winter 2017. Alongside this 'technical' work which will be required to support the proposal, Highways England should establish an appropriate means of ongoing engagement with the community to ensure that their concerns are properly understood and taken into account as the preferred route is developed.
132. In summary, the Council expects the preferred route to provide an effective Henlade bypass, to provide a safe and convenient access to both Taunton and Nexus 25, and that the other concerns set out within this report are appropriately addressed through proper engagement with the Council.
133. The Council would indicatively prefer to see the provision of a new M5 junction further to the south west that would better serve the long term needs of Taunton beyond the current Local Plan period and, subject to further investigation and assessment, a connection from the new A358 back into Junction 25 at the roundabout which will provide access into Nexus 25. This would not only provide a 2nd M5 junction for Taunton but would also vitally provide a bypass for Henlade which the vast majority of traffic would use.
134. At this point the Council is of the view that the detailed proposal does not meet the vision and strategic objectives set out by the Government in relation to National Networks and there is a risk, in the context of the NPS, that the proposal presented will "result in adverse impacts of the development outweighing its benefits".

Taunton Deane Bridleways Association

From: Ann Finn [<mailto:annfinn2017@gmail.com>]
Sent: 04 July 2017 17:26
To: A358 Taunton to Southfields
Subject: A358 Consultation- Further comments from Taunton Deane Bridleways Association

Dear Sir,

I recently posted comments and maps for the above consultation from Taunton Deane Bridleways Association.

After ore discussions with one of your officers at the last meeting, I shouls like to add the following comments:

1. Any bridges across the new road should have parapets of the height recommended by The British Horse Society to provide a safe crossing for horse riders.
2. All access provided for vulnerable users should be of bridleway or restricted byway status - NOT just cycleways, which cannot be used by horseriders

Thank you,,

Ann Finn
Chair, Taunton Deane Bridleways Association

Trull Parish Council**Trull Parish Council response to A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling public consultation.**

It is unclear if the proposed new junction on the M5 at Killams Avenue south of the existing J25 falls within our parish or just outside the parish boundary. Trull Parish Council would therefore like confirmation of the exact location and scale of this proposed junction to understand the impact it will have.

It would also like to be added to the statutory list of consultees to ensure better communication and greater involvement in the consultation than it has enjoyed to date, whether the junction falls within the parish or just outside.

The Technical Appraisal document does not appear to acknowledge that this proposed junction directly abuts the Vivary Green Wedge. This is designated protected land which forms a vital "green lung" that Trull Parish Council has sought to protect from development, most recently in the Spring of this year. The Parish Council would obviously not wish to see a motorway junction on this Green Wedge or in any proximity which would directly affect it.

Trull Parish Council understands that at present the proposed junction is to facilitate free flowing movement of traffic to and from the A358 and M5. However, it has grave concerns over the potential for any further vehicle movements at this junction in the future. The village of Trull and the roads extending through the parish to Killams have no footpaths. They are well used by children and residents of all ages accessing the school, village halls, clubs and numerous other facilities on foot and by cycle. The Parish Council is already aware that some drivers, seeking an alternative route from the south side of Taunton to the north, use Trull village and the narrow roads to Killams as a "rat run". If the proposed new junction was opened to general traffic joining or leaving the M5 it would undoubtedly lead to a huge increase in vehicles trying to access the junction through our Parish. This would only be exacerbated by the proposed development of 2,000 new homes here. Trull Parish Council would find the possibility of this motorway junction being anything other than an access and egress to the A358 completely unacceptable.

West Hatch Parish Council
**Final Comments on A358 dual carriageway proposals
from West Hatch Parish Council (WHPC), July 14th 2017.**
Preamble

You will have received The WHPC Interim Comments on the A358 dual carriageway proposal dated June 8th 2017 and the letter of agreement by the Parishes of West Hatch, Neroche, Trull, Hatch Beauchamp, Stoke St Mary and the unparished Killams and Mountfield, dated 14th June 2017. These WHPC Final Comments do not rehearse the points and arguments made in those letters, which we believe remain valid and to which a response is awaited, but emphasise the specific concerns of West Hatch parishioners.

1. Consultation Process.

Although we acknowledge that the initial consultation is not a statutory requirement, the consultation process to date has been deeply flawed and we are in total agreement with the view expressed by Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) in their formal consultation response that *“Overall, the Council is of the view that the lack of engagement with it and other key parties has resulted in a consultation which could well be flawed and is based on an undeveloped evidence base. The Council urges in the strongest possible terms for Highways England to properly engage with it and other key parties before publishing information in the formal stage of consultation. The approach adopted by Highways England thus far is simply not acceptable.”*

2. Comments

1. The dualling of the A358 throughout its entire length is unnecessary. Until such time as the A303/A30 to Honiton is completed, as intended within the next few years, the A358 problems associated with congestion, economic growth and safety can be resolved by a variation on the 2A/2B option:
 - a. Proper development of a short Henlade by-pass incorporating a spur to the planned Somerset County Council (SCC) and TDBC NEXUS and Junction25 developments.
 - b. No Junction A (25A), incorporate and improve into existing Junction25 plans.
 - c. No Junction B at the end of West Hatch Lane, site beginning of by-pass as close to Henlade as possible using a Y junction and not a roundabout.
 and
 - d. Proper development of Southfield roundabout.

It is not necessary, nor desirable to increase the speed of traffic along the A358 from 60mph to 70mph, this merely exacerbates the congestion problems at either end. A 50 mph limit fully monitored and policed would reduce the number and severity of accidents and smooth traffic flow as has proved to be the case elsewhere, e.g. M25.

2. While WHPC appreciates that the proposals are at an early stage, the effect on the local community cannot be ascertained until we know more about the detail of the intersections and the number and location of the proposed local traffic crossing, joining and leaving points. Without such detail, the effect on local vehicular, cycle, equestrian and pedestrian traffic cannot be known. Of particular concern is the potential loss of access across the A358 for personal, agricultural, academic, ecclesiastical, business, etc, purposes and the resulting increases in journey times, costs, use of natural resources, pollution and congestion on the local roads through

our villages. In particular access to the A358 at Bickenhall Lane and Capland is essential if unacceptable levels of traffic through the villages south of the A358 are to be avoided.

West Hatch Parish is already divided by the present A358 and we welcome the statement that *“Furthermore, the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and access is encouraged, for instance where national road network severs communities and community facilities and acts as a barrier for walking and cycling, developers are expected to correct historic problems and ensure easier and safer access for NMUs.”* WHPC believes that this should also apply to all NMUs including equestrian and to vehicular traffic.

An underpass linking West Hatch Lane to the Hatch Beauchamp road, which in turn should incorporate an underpass and new graded junctions with the A358, would immeasurably improve local access and movement of NMUs in West Hatch and the adjacent villages.

3. Conclusion

1. A radical re-think of the present proposals should be conducted prior to the next consultation process. This should be based on a modified 2A/2B option and the acceptance that dualling the entire length of the road is unnecessary.
2. A major junction at the end of West Hatch Lane (B) is not acceptable.
3. Details of the minor road options for junctions along the A358 need to be made explicit when the next proposals are submitted for consultation.

West Hatch Parish Council,
July 14th 2017

Theme Area- Junction proposals	Consultee Feedback
Junction A	Taken in isolation the section from Junction A to Junction B would appear to be an acceptable route in principle but much will depend on detailed design and the effect on particular locations. For example the location of Junction A appears to be very close to properties in the Killams area and the impact of the scheme on the village of Stoke St Mary would be of major importance to local residents.
Junction A	I wish to register my strongest protest against the proposed new M5 Motorway Junction 'A' (Section 1) location south of Taunton at Killams Avenue. Only 1 option has been put forward for public consultation despite the existence of 4 alternative options from the Technical Appraisal Report. This only option should be halted on the grounds that it will NOT alleviate traffic through Henlade and, there would be no link to the proposed Industrial (Nexus 25) employment / development site at Junction 25. Most traffic will bypass Taunton and tourism in Somerset could be seriously affected as it becomes a holiday route to Devon and Cornwall. Taunton has been selected to become a Garden Town NOT a bypass town!
Junction C	We would like to propose another junction is created at Stewley/Kenny in addition to planned JC at Ashill/Rapps. If the Rapps/Ashill proposed junction C, remained in isolation, it would draw all the Taunton/M5 traffic through our peaceful (virtually traffic free) village un-necessarily.

Theme Area – Alternative routes	Consultee Feedback
Alternative routes	<p>The Council expects the preferred route to provide an effective Henlade bypass, provide a safe and convenient access to both Taunton and Nexus 25, and that the other concerns set out within this report are appropriately addressed through proper engagement with the Council.</p> <p>The Council would indicatively prefer to see the provision of a new M5 junction further to the south west that would better serve the long term needs of Taunton beyond the current Local Plan period and, subject to further investigation and assessment, a connection from the new A358 back into Junction 25 at the roundabout which will provide access into Nexus 25.</p>
Alternative routes	We have reviewed the high level plans which are being consulted upon by Highways England (HE) and consider that that an alternative option is deliverable. This alternative option will achieve the same aims but will also enable land to come forward for residential development, so that any new dual carriageway does not become a future barrier to future growth of the town. It is appreciated that the HE proposals are at an early stage and will be further refined and detailed following this consultation exercise. It is likely that the level of detail considered as part of this exercise has not been available to the design team preparing the Taunton to Southfields scheme.

Theme Area – Alternative routes	Consultee Feedback
Alternative routes	TDLD's view is that Highways England's (HE) Taunton to Southfields proposals are unacceptable due to: its failure to support strategic and policy objectives established for Taunton and Taunton town centre; its failure to address the access issues at the Hankridge retail park; its failure to support the Nexus 25 business development, contrary to the Government's and Highways England's own policies, and its failure to provide a meaningful solution to the volume of traffic passing through and level of pollution affecting Thornfalcon and Henlade.
Alternative routes	Currently Highways England are consulting on only one route, the one they selected. It is not the route required by the District Council, requested by the County Council or desired by the population of the areas which will be forever changed by this scheme.
Alternative routes	All options include leaving the existing roundabout at Southland as a junction at grade. This roundabout already causes significant tailbacks and delay. There is already a de facto turning lane from the A358 to the A303 as currently used, although a properly protected lane would increase the flow to some extent. Leaving the Southfield roundabout as a junction at grade will significantly reduce the economics case for and the anticipated reduction in delays resulting from the A358 scheme.
Alternative routes	I am very concerned that the proposed new route for the A358 does not provide a direct link to the Nexus 25 business park and also that it leaves the A358 through Henlade as the main route into Taunton. This consultation on one route seems to have cast doubt on the whole consultation process, is this route going to be designated as the "Preferred Route" at the next stage of the consultation albeit with a few small tweaks arising out of this consultation stage. Or is there a possibility that although you are consulting on this one route that your "Preferred Route" will be something completely different such as Option 2A/2B that cuts through Henlade, if so then the other 3 options should have formed part of this consultation.
Alternative routes	We would like to see consideration of alternative and less disruptive ways to achieve a fast road from the M3 into the South West by improving existing junctions at Southfields and M5 Junction 25 to improve traffic flow, a plan to remove bottlenecks caused by the 3 lane Ilminster bypass, ideally by dualling it and an eventual upgrade to the A303/A30 to provide an alternative route not using the M5. Greater clarity is needed over how proposed junctions can work without increasing pressure on small local access roads.
Alternative routes	Currently Highways England are consulting on only one route, the one they selected. It is not the route required by the District Council, requested by the County Council or desired by the population of the area which will be changed forever by this scheme.
Alternative routes	Currently, you are consulting on only one route, the one you have apparently already pre-selected. It is not the route required by the District Council, requested by the County Council or desired by the population of the areas which will be forever changed by this scheme. The present proposal to route a new 6 kilometre dual carriageway to a new closed motorway Junction 25A, to the south of

Theme Area – Alternative routes	Consultee Feedback
	Taunton is, quite simply, a travesty and the so-called consultation process is a farce.
Alternative routes	It is evident from the work that has been undertaken by HE, that considerable effort has gone into the development of the scheme options with several different options having been considered before the 'Option 8/8B + NFS' emerged as the preferred option. However, the principle of providing additional grade separated junctions on the new A358 alignment should not be excluded or discounted should a clear case to support such provision emerge in the near future as such provision could further enhance connectivity and support growth.
Alternative routes	Of the 4 options discussed in the TAR, Option 8/8B + NFS has the worst monetised cost benefits for accidents, roadworks, noise, economic and reliability. The only positives are from greenhouse gases, air quality and build cost, but not by much. The new road junction is designed to take traffic off the existing A3030/A30 between Southfields roundabout and M5 J29 and redirect it along the new A358 and M5, but nowhere in the TAR does it give any data for the current traffic flow between M5 J25 and M5 J29. This part of the M5 can already be congested at peak times, which will only get worse if this new road is constructed.
Alternative routes	Currently Highways England are consulting on only one route, the one they selected. It is not the route required by the District Council, requested by the County Council or desired by the population of the area which will be changed forever by this scheme.
Alternative routes	In seeking a solution to the bottlenecks at J25 it seems illogical to me to propose a southerly route since very little of the traffic arriving from the East, head south.
Alternative routes	This proposal will not reduce traffic going into Taunton/M5 Northbound via the A358 Henlade road and with the potential increase noise levels, to name one problem, near any new dualling scheme would have a further detrimental effect on the village of Henlade, Stoke St Mary and Haydon. In summary, the Option 8/8B + NFS lacks detail in all parts and should be removed as an option with immediate effect after the consultation period has concluded.

Theme Area – Highways design	Consultee Feedback
Non-Motorised Users	Any bridges across the new road should have parapets of the height recommended by The British Horse Society to provide a safe crossing for horse riders. All access provided for vulnerable users should be of bridleway or restricted byway status - NOT just cycle ways, which cannot be used by horse riders.
Non-Motorised Users	The scheme will worsen existing conditions for people walking and cycling by increasing traffic on the wider road network, with increased danger, noise and air pollution, without providing any significant traffic relief to Henlade, and thus better conditions for current, and importantly potential, walkers and cyclists. Locally the scheme is hugely damaging, destroying a unique and peaceful area of countryside, blighting villages, hamlets and woodland areas.
Flooding	I see in the TAR you are aware of the flood plain in the Broughton Brook area as per the EA map below. Any water added to this in the Stoke Road area is going to aggravate the problem here which from my experience the do not seem to have a natural ability to do. If you are going to discharge water near Stoke Road I would suggest the drainage system needs upgrading all the way to the River Tone. I would suggest the 2 water courses between Stoke Road and Holway Road be widened and straightened as suggested by the M5 authorities.
Flooding	Any additional water at Stoke Road is going to aggravate the situation at New Barn Farm and so I propose that the following be implemented to improve the drainage; a new watercourse is construction from the M5 authorities from the old Holway Road by New Barn Farm to the River Tone. The Broughton Brook should be widened and the other watercourse from Stoke Road should be straightened and enlarged.
Flooding	The main land drainage running off Stoke Hill into Lower Henlade, runs through our clients' holding, mainly via numerous ditches. Great care must be taken to factor this existing drainage into the road scheme plans, and our clients would ask that Highways England consult with them and their Agent at an early stage in this respect.
Flooding	I feel that as a majority land owner at the Hatched Park Estate I have not been properly consulted. The Hatch Park Estates runs along both sides of A358 and the existing road already causes problems with flooding, the proposals do not make it clear how they will help the existing flooding.
Safety	In principle, we understand and support the proposal to upgrade the road to dual carriageway and to relieve congestion at Henlade. However, we are not happy with the single option proposal currently out for consultation. Your own Technical Appraisal Report shows Option 8/8B +NFS to be the worst of the 4 detailed options assessed in terms of: value for money, road accidents/fatalities, and other safety considerations due to the proximity to the existing J25.
Safety	The proposal does not bypass this section of the A358 as the North

Theme Area – Highways design	Consultee Feedback
	<p>Facing Slips (NFS) only provide a link to southbound M5 traffic only and the traffic going north bound, to Taunton and the new Park and Ride will still travel along the A358.</p> <p>The proposed option 8/8B+NFS has the lowest BCR, increases accidents, increases the maintenance costs and has a negative effect on the environment This is in addition to it not providing a Henlade bypass to traffic going to Taunton or northbound and it being a comprise junction with only NFS.</p>
Safety	<p>The present proposal to route a new 6 kilometre dual carriageway to a new closed motorway Junction 25A, to the south of Taunton would be an unnecessary travesty. By reading the limited details supplied by Highways England the proposed scheme is possibly the least expensive but offers the lowest benefit to cost ration and as far as I can ascertain, fulfil any of the criteria set down by government.</p> <p>HOW CAN YOU JUSTIFY THE ONLY OPTION WITH AN INCREASE IN ACCDIENTS AT THE 'BEST' PROPOSAL?'</p>
Traffic	<p>Local business expressing concern over where the 'money is coming' from the complete the scheme. Supportive of the scheme to improve the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester. Believes reconsideration should be given to the motorway junction being at Haydon, Lower Henlade Road, with a one way access and egress to the M5 heading South (West) as it appears the main consideration is for A303 traffic to progress to Exeter and return therefore this junction only needs to be one way, reducing noise in that vicinity and saving cost, extending this road to Shoreditch does not seem to have any benefit.</p>
Traffic	<p>I agree with the proposal to leave Henlade as is and go from a "roundabout" to a new motorway junction south of Jct25. Also agree with the option to have a roundabout at the last Ashill junction (which interconnects with Thickthorne Lane) as a "roundabout" (or the like).</p>
Traffic	<p>The dualling of the A358 throughout its entire length is unnecessary. Until such time as the A303/A30 to Honiton is completed, as intended within the next few years, the A358 problems associated with congestion, economic growth and safety can be resolved by a variation on the 2A/2B option. It is not necessary, nor desirable to increase the speed of traffic along the A358 from 60mph to 70mph, this merely exacerbates the congestion problems at either end. A radical re-think of the present proposals should be conducted prior to the next consultation process. This should be based on a modified 2A/2B option and the acceptance that dualling the entire length of the road is unnecessary.</p>
Traffic	<p>The present proposal to route a new 6 kilometre dual carriageway to a new closed motorway Junction 25A, to the south of Taunton would an unnecessary travesty. The proposed scheme is possibly the least expensive but offers the lowest benefit to cost ratio and does not, bring an economic benefit locally, reduce congestion, reduce noise levels and will massively impact the environment.</p>
Traffic	<p>Beercrocombe Parish Council feel the proposed route does not help to relieve the flow of traffic going through Henlade and with the</p>

Theme Area – Highways design	Consultee Feedback
	proposed Industrial/Business Park adjacent to the Taunton Park and Ride even more traffic will be generated in that area. If this route is adopted it is essential that a link road should be constructed from Junction 25a directly into Taunton and a link road from the proposed route to the existing M25 junction to incorporate the proposed development close to the junction.
Traffic	The alignment at Taunton you have chosen to consult on does not meet the requirements of the strategy for the south west region or the needs of Taunton-bound or north-turning traffic. The small amount of traffic arriving at Taunton from the east and headed towards Devon and Cornwall is taken by a new alignment to a new junction to the south, leaving most traffic to trundle through Henlade on an unimproved section of the present A358. There is not even any incentive for A378 traffic from North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Wrantage or Langport to divert to the new alignment, providing relief for Henlade and other communities along the existing road.
Traffic	This scheme needs joined up thinking and proper strategy for new junction. There are 4000 houses being built in Comeytrove and a southern distributor road is required from A38 Rumwell through to the new j25A. Otherwise all traffic still goes through town centre, take a leaf out of Cirencester for example that has a ring road to avoid town traffic.
Traffic	Option 8/8B+ J25 appears a much better option than the one selected. This is because it properly provides a bypass for Henlade and a good access to the proposed Nexus business Park and onwards into Taunton along a suitable route – i.e. Tone Way. It does not necessitate a diversion as Option 8/8B+NFS would require to reach Taunton - which the local community considers most people would not make, and would continue to travel through Henlade, to the detriment of travellers and residents. It does not compromise the environment (noise, air quality and possibly hydrology) as Option 2A/2B would appear to do. Is HE prepared to reconsider its Option decision which is not what anybody seems to want? - Or will they push ahead as they are on a DCO path, which means that having consulted they can do what they decide? It does not seem to be in the best interests of anybody.
Traffic	The proposals will not ease traffic or safety along the M5. This will make journey times even more unpredictable and in particular will increase congestion around the Junction 25 of M5.

Theme Area local community considerations	Consultee Feedback
Impact on community	Creech St Michael Parish Council supports the principle of a new high quality dual carriageway road from London via the M3 to Taunton in order to bring economic benefits to Somerset. However, they feel that even with the J25 improvements SCC plan then the J25 junction even with the improvement will not be able to cope with increased volume of traffic and is not capable of even further improvement.

Theme Area local community considerations	Consultee Feedback
Impact on community	I feel that these developments should be kept as close as possible to existing roads to minimise the impact on the local community and environment. People along the existing route bought their houses knowing that there was a main road there; people along the new proposed route did not!
Impact on community	It seems that the Government just wants to do the cheapest option in providing free flowing direct route within considering the other options. All of these which have greater attributed and are better value for money than the road being put out to consultation
Impact on community	To see that you are proposing to re-route the A358 across these fields will destroy that landscape and then to escape the noise of this new route will be impossible within the timeframe and distance of a reasonable walk from where I live. The old route of the A358 through Henlade looks as if it will remain so you are just creating more noise and additional road disruption elsewhere. It won't end up with just a road. This triangle of the M5, the old A358 and the new A358 will then be filled with more housing etc. etc. and one won't be able to walk and enjoy the countryside beyond the M5 anymore.
Impact on community	Your own detailed assessment demonstrates that the selected route offers the only tangible benefit of lowest capital cost. It fails in every other respect and is so clearly the least favourable route based on all other considerations. Thus the claim that this route is 'in line with the Government's road investment strategy' demonstrates Government is only interested in capital cost to the exclusion of all other considerations.
Impact on community	It is clear from the content of the report that the Single Route Option currently being consulted on would have a devastating impact on the business and property as a whole. The current route alignment would also be subject to larger sums of compensation to the respondent than a minor amendment which is sought as part of this response.
Impact on community	Whilst we have no specific comments to make on the proposed A358 route alignment, we would encourage Highways England to take full account of the views of communities, residents and business that are more immediately affected by the proposed road improvement.
Impact on community	I feel that although we do accept that this scheme has benefits (although like many Taunton residents we are deeply despairing about how much thought is being given to the long-term impact of the town's development.) however, the location of junction A needs far more consideration and consultation in an open and relaxed environment.
Local economy	I feel it is another expense we cannot afford and will lead to another road being blocked up. There will be an increase in pollution and crime and the possible extinction of vital wildlife in the local area.
Local economy	Recommends that a local tram shuttle should replace the existing bus service.
Local economy	The solution will enable traffic to flow perfectly such time as the A303/30 dualling is completed. It fullfills all the criteria set out in the

Theme Area local community considerations	Consultee Feedback
	Technical Appraisal and undoubtedly will cost considerably less than the present proposals in 2A/2B.
Local economy	I find it quite worrying that the proposal doesn't actually cut journey times significantly so I do wonder why so much devastation has to happen at ridiculous expense for so little benefit. When asked whether the placement of the new junction had anything to do with the proposals for development south of Taunton they claimed there was no correlation, please can you explain this reference on your website. And the project team stated that access to the A358 would be limited, so how on earth is this meant to help existing businesses thrive?
Local economy	I would like to express our support for the proposed A358 Taunton to Southfields improvements which will be of great benefit to our business.
Local economy	The present proposal will not bring economic benefit local, not markedly reduce local congestion, particularly through Henlade and will actually increase noise levels and accidents. It will also have a massive impact on the local environment, ancient woodlands and prime arable land and landscape.
Local roads	Lower Henlade and Stoke Road Residents' Association feels that the scheme will not help commuters or visitors from Taunton coming from the south east and will not help to reduce traffic passing through Henlade to the A358. They express concern on the economic benefit the proposals will bring to the local area, in particular Taunton and Henlade.
Local roads	Devon County Council feel that the proposed option fails to solve 2 different needs, offering the lowest transport benefits of all options in terms of lack of relief for Henlade, road safety, roadwork's and greenhouse gases, and a large adverse impact on landscape. The TAR does not provide specific traffic data for the impact of the preferred option on the M5 south of Taunton, there is a clear strategic intention that more traffic from the A303 Southfields will be encouraged to use the proposed new route to reach destinations further west in the Peninsula.
Local roads	We feel very strongly that the proposed alterations would make it very difficult to CROSS the 358 easily without the provision of a bridge across the road, and to avoid making the journey much longer. It would also make the social cohesion activities in these villages much more difficult.
Local roads	The current plans will see a major increase in the traffic around the local supporting road network. Journeys from Kenny to Stewley and Ilton to local amenities in Broadway will all be significantly increased.
Local roads	I checked the Taunton Library this week and found a report amended in April, which showed no amendment to the junctions even though the Park Lane Junction leads to a dead end. There was no mention as to how the residents of Horton and Broadway can access and exit the dual carriageway apart from a detour to the dangerous and congested roundabout at Southfields.
Local roads	I feel that the proposal to bridge all the local roads in the area could

Theme Area local community considerations	Consultee Feedback
	lead to further congestion into Taunton and could also increase traffic into Honiton which could lead to road subsidence. Junction 25 also struggles with local capacity and the current proposals for junction A would only increase traffic capacity slightly.
Local roads	The present proposal to route a new 6 kilometre dual carriageway to a new closed motorway Junction 25A, to the south of Taunton would be an unnecessary travesty. The proposed scheme is possibly the least expensive but offers the lowest benefit to cost ratio and does not, as far as I can ascertain, fulfil any of the criteria set down by the government.
Local roads	We welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposals and strongly support the proposed route option 8/8b plus north facing slip roads. Concern should however be noted for the rat running that occurs on the east side for the M5 through small villages such as Creech St Michael. Design of the route should address reducing the opportunity for the rat running to occur.

Theme Area - Views on consultation	Consultee Feedback
Audiences	The whole scheme has been very unprofessionally handled. Some of the residents that are directly affected only learned of the new road through taking the local paper, the Somerset Gazette. Some, whose prime agricultural land, which is supposed to be protected and is proposed to be taken, either had belated letters from Highways England, after the private meetings or still haven't received any notification.
Audiences	I note that there has been no consultation with the SSC or TDBC. The SSC Core Strategy shows development up to 2028; there is no awareness of the proposal which would have no bearing of contribution to Taunton long term plans; their preferred option of 2A/2B was supported and would help the proposed business park.
Availability of information	I believe this vast expenditure and disruption is not needed. Congestion does occur, but mainly at rush-hour or following an accident/breakdown or during roadworks. Increasing the traffic speeds and volume will not allay congestion, as there would still be constrictions at the Southfields Roundabout, and through Henlade. Anyone heading into Taunton or north onto the M5 (from the A303 or Ilminster or South Somerset) would still travel through at least one of these constrictions, if using the A358.
Level of detail	Asked if more detailed maps of the new M5 connection were available – and were told there were no maps other than that provided in the consultation “brochure”. We were very pleased to hear that the planned and preferred route had a connection to the M5 that was closed i.e. had north and south connections to the M5 and the A358 – but no connections for local traffic. On this basis we responded positively to the proposed route.
Level of detail	At the consultation exhibition I recently attended I was informed that that the benefits of taking Southfields offline had not been modelled

Theme Area - Views on consultation	Consultee Feedback
	or assessed. Please provide me with a detailed explanation and supporting justification why the option of joining the A358 and the A303 without using Southfields Roundabout has not been included in your proposal.
Level of detail	Whilst we support the overall objective of the proposed improvements, the correct route alignment is imperative to us and the estate along with the road users, and affected parties along the length of the entire A358. At the current time you have given very little detail and hence we reserve our comments on areas such as: Road location, alignment and Layout, Accommodation works; Road surface; Any lighting; Size and location of any road water attenuation ponds; The road height; The surface of the road; and the proposals for the 2 underpasses we currently have under the A358.
Level of detail	Feels that the A303 should be upgraded before the A358. The current proposals will increase traffic along Rapps Road and the proposals do not appear to have taken this into consideration. Rapps is not Ashill and this needs to be remembered.
Level of detail	For the avoidance of doubt, Eden Hotel Collection opposes the proposed A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling scheme. The recent public consultation event was unsatisfactory, you failed to display any detailed information in respect of the proposal. You failed to provide an ordnance survey map (to scale) in order to gauge the distance from the hotel to the line of the proposed highway. You have not provided a lighting plan or confirmation that there will be no street lighting on the proposed highway.
Level of detail	The consultation lacks detail specifically in regard to location of the main junctions, crossing points and access that is to be provided off the A358 to farm drives, farm tracks and land as well as the local road network. The impact of farm traffic not being able to access the A358 in the future and the impact that these works could have on surrounding roads has not been considered. Why has only this single route option been consulted on at this stage – we would like to see route 2A/2B consulted upon further as this has merits.
Level of detail	Highways England gives the impression it will take into consideration the public's response to its proposals but this only extends to the minor details, such as the location of bridges and slip roads; the major proposal itself appears to be not up for discussion. Highways England's intention is to create a dual carriageway 'expressway' with a continual physical central barrier; this will have the effect of raising legal traffic speeds from the current 60mph speed limit to 70mph, with a resultant increase in noise and pollution on residents living in the vicinity.
Level of detail	North Curry Parish Council feels that the consultation did not provide the consultees with the correct evidence and in particular, traffic flow information at Junction 25 and the volume of the former A303/30 traffic. The proposed option does not open up the potential economic benefit of the scheme and proposes no link to the commercial or business areas of Taunton.

Theme Area - Views on consultation	Consultee Feedback
Level of detail	I feel that the presentation negates the rationale for the proposal so much that the plans are supposed to increase traffic flows and management of the M5 corridor and it also envisages the new dual carriageway from the new M5 junction which doubles back on itself to meet a new roundabout at Wes Hatch then follows closely the existing route to meet the A303 Southfield roundabout.
Level of detail	The detail is very important to us and currently you have given very little details on the following: road location, alignment and layout including road height, accommodation works; road surface; any road lighting. On the proposals the following should be stressed that Griffin Lane should remain open to facilitate community life including but by no means limited to access to schools and the church at West Hatch, construction is going to take a long time and cause lots of disruption to our home, Griffin road has severe drainage problems and the proposals will lead to a significant increase in traffic and pollution.
Material	The TAR supplied by Highways England contains many instances of either insufficient or incorrect data that has not been updated recently. The party consulting should supply accurate and proven data to allow affected parties to consider the facts and not to guess at the meaning of inaccurate data. As consultees we wish to express our sincere dissatisfaction with the presentation of the initial consultation.
Material	Of the 4 options discussed in the TAR, option 8/8B has the worst monetised cost benefits for accidents, road works, noise, economic and reliability. Throughout the TAR, there is no consideration of the noise or light pollution impacts.
Material	The booklet entitles A350 dualling Scheme discusses section 1 and a new Junction 25A on the M5. This needs to be a 4-way junction, but that is not clear from the script. Section 9 states proposed widening of the existing A358 to dual carriageway. This dual has to be a brand new road, if access is only at junction B, C, D. This is not stated, and again is misleading.

Theme Area – Environmental considerations	Consultee Feedback
Countryside	If the scheme goes ahead we will not be returning to Ashe Farm – who wants to spend their holiday with the A38 behind them and the new dual carriageway just over the hedge in front of them – I know I don't and I am sure many others who currently use the site will not either – I think the site will change from one with lots of return visitors who stay for more than 1 night to a 1 night stopover site which will be a complete change from how it is now and has been for the last 20 + years.
Countryside	The Technical Appraisal Report document does not appear to acknowledge that this proposed junction directly abuts the Vivary Green Wedge. This is designated protected land which forms a vital “green lung” that Trull Parish Council has sought to protect from development, most recently in the Spring of this year. The Parish

Theme Area – Environmental considerations	Consultee Feedback
	Council would obviously not wish to see a motorway junction on this Green Wedge or in any proximity which would directly affect it. If the proposed new junction was opened to general traffic joining or leaving the M5 it would undoubtedly lead to a huge increase in vehicles trying to access the junction through our Parish.
Countryside	The CPRE Somerset think that the scheme does not give full weight to the material consideration of impact on and protection of the countryside which is a valuable national asset.
Countryside	The road will carve up beautiful countryside in the foothills of the Blackdown Hills. The concreting over of valuable, high quality agricultural land. Create noise and pollution. Damage wildlife and the environment in general. Building more roads and increasing the size of existing ones is not the way forward. It simply introduces even more traffic, more noise and more pollution and at the same time seriously damages our countryside.
Landscape	Unnecessary destruction of arable land, noise, pollution, destroying some ancient woodland and wildlife habitat. Destruction of arable land, wildlife habitat, pollution and noise. Whatever the public's view the government does not listen!! Stop eroding the countryside and ruining the natural environment. The government talks about cutting down on pollution on one hand, but making decisions which increases it on the other.
Noise	My main concern is that the peace and quiet in my immediate surroundings and the general quality of life for my family, my animals and me will be ruined by the dualling of the A358 and the increase of access to it, near my property. I fear that the whole A358 scheme will be a waste of effort, disruption and money as the A303 access and the long Ilminster bye pass which is part of the A303, will be even more congested than now.
Wildlife	Although I am supportive of the proposal to build a bridge from Staley Lane across to the old main road at Achill the biggest concern is the option to take the new dual spur off before the Thorn falcon lights and the proposed new roundabout at Hatch Beauchamp. This option will affect the surrounding wildlife and 18 species of ancient woodland and native UK bats living there.
Wildlife	Holway Park Community Primary School feel that although the proposals are needed to make it easier to travel from London to Cornwall and Devon they do not want to lose their woods and they regularly use them for camping trips and pioneering.

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

