

# A303 Stonehenge

Amesbury to Berwick Down

Moving forward - the preferred route



Before



After



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## About this booklet

This booklet presents the preferred route for the A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down project and a summary of how the consultation we carried out in early 2017 influenced it.

It doesn't set out every consultation response we received, nor address every issue that was raised.

For a complete analysis and detailed response to consultation feedback, please see the Report on Public Consultation and our post-consultation Scheme Assessment Report. Both are available online at [www.highways.gov.uk/a303stonehengepra](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a303stonehengepra) together with a range of other useful documents. There's a full list at the end of this booklet.

## 1 Foreword



“The way ahead is clear for economic opportunity, community life and enhancing our national heritage.”

I'm delighted to be able to share with you the details of our preferred route for upgrading the A303 past Stonehenge. After 30 years of attempts to improve this section of road, which runs within sight and sound of the nation's most famous prehistoric monument, this is real progress and a clear step towards our goal of starting construction in 2021.

The A303 is on the most direct strategic route from the South East to the South West for business and tourists. But its reputation as a bottle-neck is making the South West seem hard to reach and is holding the region's economy back. It also cuts across the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site (WHS), just 165m from the stones themselves.

Thanks to feedback from more than 9,000 people and organisations in our consultation earlier this year, and information gained from further surveys and studies, we can move forward with a solution.

The most significant change since the consultation has been a re-think on the route through the western half of the WHS and the location of the western tunnel portal, which are now much closer to the existing line of the

A303. We have also agreed with the view that the new Winterbourne Stoke bypass should go north of the village.

Our preferred route for a free-flowing dual carriageway between Amesbury and Berwick Down will make journeys quicker and safer, while helping put an end to the harm caused by rat-running in nearby communities. As part of an Expressway to the South West, the scheme will boost economic productivity, creating opportunity and prosperity for local people.

It will also deliver once-in-a-generation improvements to the setting of Stonehenge itself, as well as reconnecting the two halves of the WHS and restoring tranquillity to one of the UK's heritage icons.

Just as importantly, we are confident this route is both deliverable and good value for the tax payer – issues which have made the project stumble in the past.

There is still more to do. We will develop the details of the preferred route and give you another chance to comment on these before we submit our proposal for development consent. This booklet explains how the consultation we carried out, along with further surveys and studies, has influenced the project so far.

Derek Parody

Project Director, A303 Stonehenge

## 2 Introduction

The map opposite shows our preferred route, which has been confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport.

Since consultation, we have modified the route through the western part of the World Heritage Site (WHS) and have decided that a northern route is the best option for providing Winterbourne Stoke with its long-awaited bypass.

The key features of the scheme remain a twin-bore tunnel with portals and approach roads within the WHS, plus junctions with the A345 and A360 either side of the WHS and a bypass for Winterbourne Stoke.

The following chapters summarise how your feedback helped us decide on the preferred route.



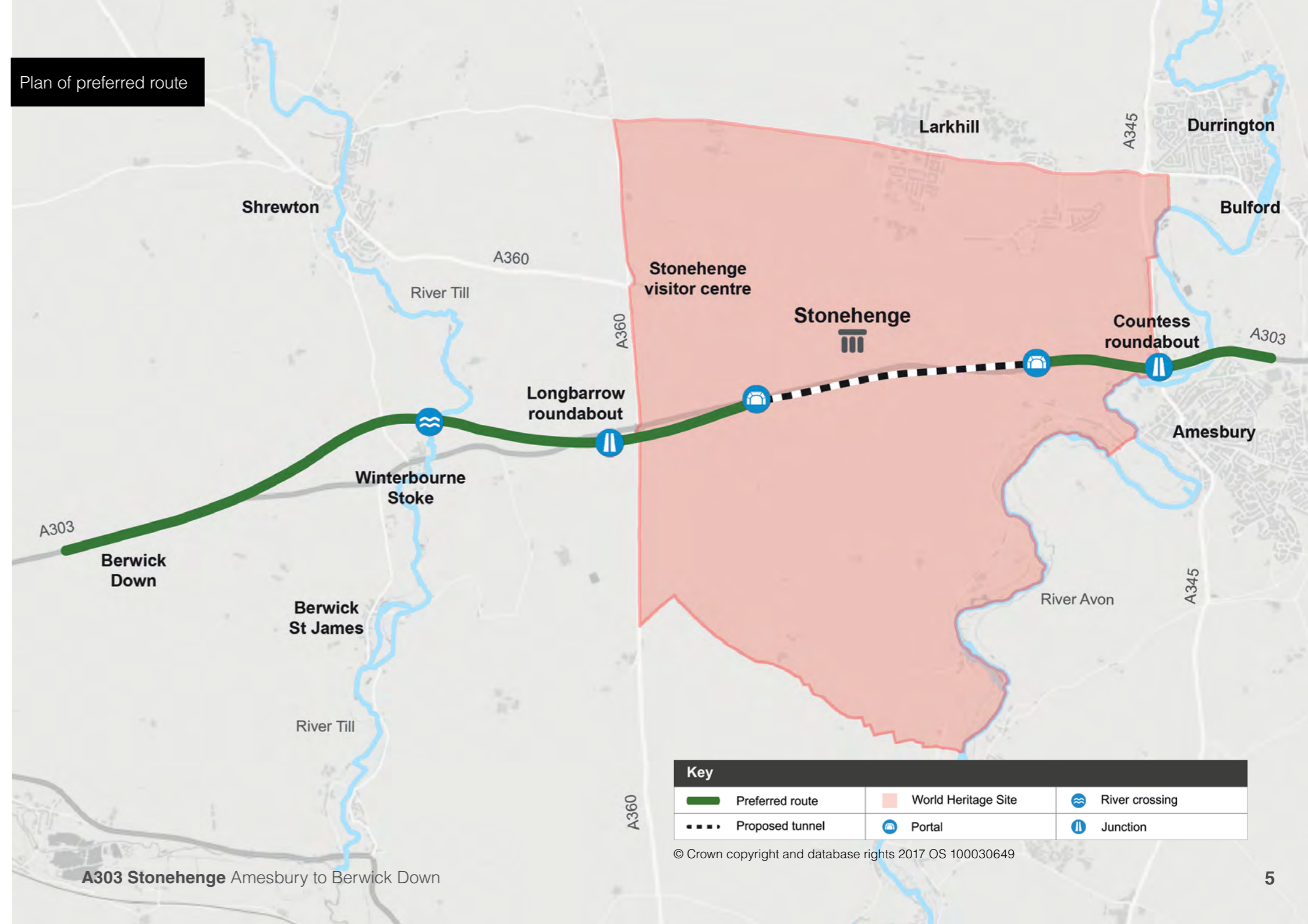
Before



After

A303 Stonehenge Amesbury to Berwick Down

Plan of preferred route



A303 Stonehenge Amesbury to Berwick Down

# 3 The consultation

## Background

As part of the most direct route between the South East and the South West, the A303 at Stonehenge plays a big part in the daily lives of tens of thousands of people, but for many it can also be a daily struggle. Average traffic flows along the single-carriageway section between Amesbury and Berwick Down are twice what it was designed for, and the road is even busier in the summer tourist period.

Previous attempts at upgrading the road have failed due to its sensitive location inside the World Heritage Site (WHS). The A303 passes just 165m from the stones themselves and cuts the WHS in two. Previous proposals dating back 30 years have stumbled over how best to tackle this in an affordable way.

But now the Government is committed to upgrading the A303 at Stonehenge and is making £1.6bn available as part of its Road Investment Strategy (RIS).

The long term aim is to transform all remaining single carriageway sections of the A303 and A358 to Taunton by creating a dual carriageway Expressway to the South West. Expressways are a new type of strategic road where mile-a-minute journeys are the norm.

As part of the Expressway, the A303 near Stonehenge will help unlock economic growth in the South West by transforming journey reliability, increasing safety and improving connectivity with neighbouring regions, while protecting or enhancing the environment.

To make sure we achieve this, the project has four key objectives:

- Transport:** To create a high quality reliable route between the South East and the South West that meets the future needs of traffic.
- Economic growth:** To enable growth in jobs and housing by providing a free-flowing and reliable connection between the South East and the South West.
- Cultural heritage:** To help conserve and enhance the World Heritage Site and to make it easier to reach and explore.
- Environment and community:** To improve biodiversity and provide a positive legacy for nearby communities.

For more information about the Expressway corridor see our booklet *Creating an Expressway to the South West: The case for the A303/A358 Corridor*.

For more information about our project objectives see our booklet *A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down: The case for the scheme*.

## Consultation proposals

The proposals we put forward at consultation followed years of extensive investigation and study.

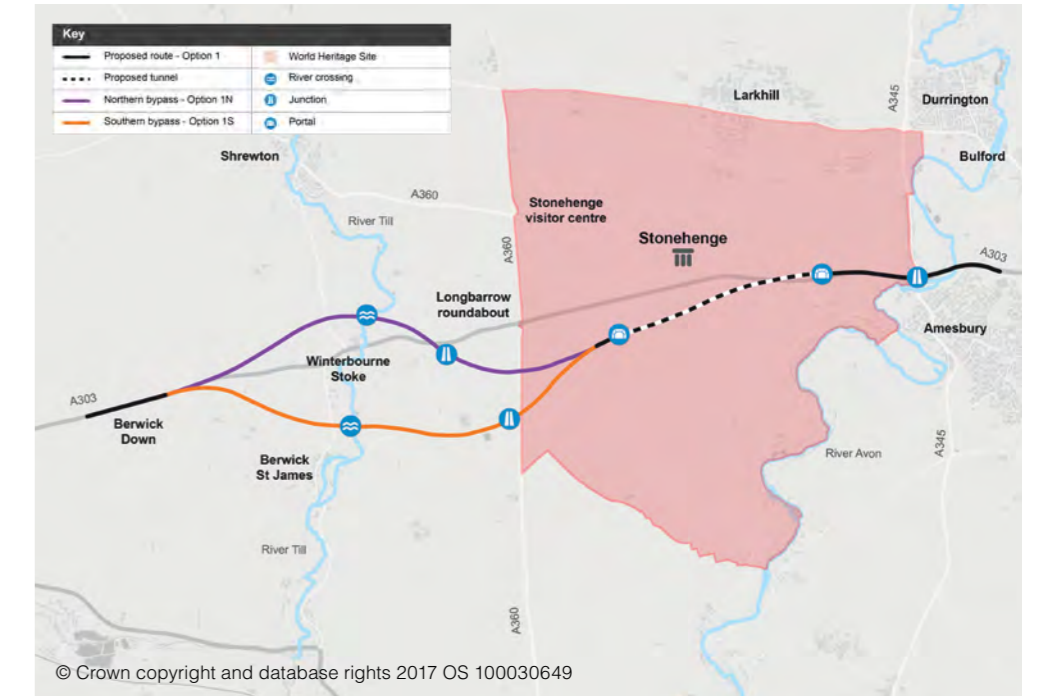
This involved first identifying all the reasonable route alternatives between Amesbury and Berwick Down, including routes with and without tunnels, some inside and some outside the WHS - more than 60 in total.

Then, using a rigorous process of increasingly detailed assessment, we gradually narrowed them down until we found the ones that best met the four key objectives.

These were the proposals we consulted on, namely:

- A 1.8 mile (2.9 kilometre) tunnel with approach roads within the WHS.
- A bypass of Winterbourne Stoke, either to the north or south of the village.
- Improvements to the existing junctions between the A303 and the intersecting A345 and A360.

For more information about the process of identifying the best option for consultation see our booklet *A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down: Public consultation booklet – January 2017*.



Plan showing route options at consultation

## How the consultation was carried out

Our non-statutory public consultation was held between 12 January and 5 March 2017. We asked people and organisations to comment on the scheme proposals and for any important information they felt we should take into account as part of its continuing development.

To make sure as many as possible had the opportunity to comment, we directly contacted people living and working within about 5km of the scheme proposals, as well as their elected representatives, statutory bodies, organisations and interest groups, affected landholders, hard-to-reach groups and the wider public.

A consultation leaflet was delivered to more than 17,000 homes and businesses. Letters and emails were sent to nearly 500 organisations and statutory bodies. Hard-to-reach groups were identified and contacted. Information points and deposit locations for project documents were also set up in public libraries.

Adverts were placed in local, regional and national newspapers, and social media was also used. There was a dedicated consultation website [www.highways.gov.uk/a303stonehenge/consultation](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a303stonehenge/consultation) where people could access technical documents, get updates and submit feedback online. People could also submit feedback by email or freepost.

More than 9,000 people and organisations responded to the consultation, with over 3,500 responding through the consultation questionnaire and some 5,600 choosing to respond using one of two pro-forma responses produced independently by Stonehenge Alliance and Friends of the Earth.

Around 2,500 people attended ten public exhibitions held at eight different venues, mainly close to the scheme, but also further west along the A303 route in Mere, south of the scheme in Salisbury, and in London at the Society of Antiquaries.

**For a complete analysis and detailed response to consultation feedback, please see the *A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down: Report on Public Consultation – September 2017*.**



**A303 Stonehenge** Amesbury to Berwick Down

## 4 What you told us

No matter how people chose to give us their feedback, we have read and considered every response and comment you gave us. Some of your comments related to detailed design, which is the next stage of the process; be assured that these will be taken into account when we reach that stage.

This chapter gives you an overview of the main areas of feedback on the proposals we consulted on. Responses are grouped under the questions in our consultation questionnaire, but they come from all the comments we received, not just those on the questionnaires.

People generally agreed that something should be done to address the problems on the A303, but there were different opinions over what.

**For full detailed summaries of and responses to the consultation feedback, please see the *A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down: Report on Public Consultation – September 2017*.**

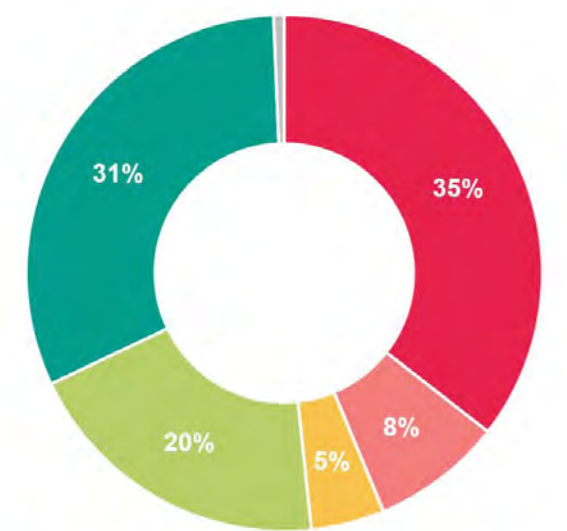
**A303 Stonehenge** Amesbury to Berwick Down



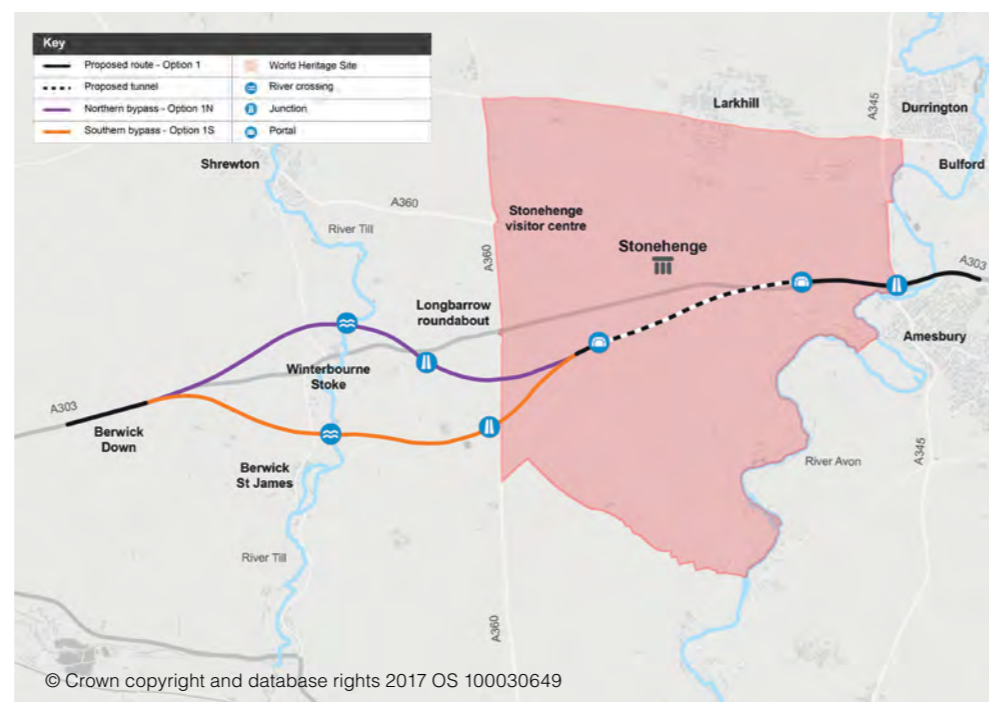
## Question 1: The proposed option in general

The proposals we consulted on consisted of a 1.8 mile (2.9 kilometre) tunnel and approach roads inside the World Heritage Site (WHS), as well as a bypass for Winterbourne Stoke (with options passing either north or south of the village) and improvements to the A303's existing junctions with the A345 and A360.

Our questionnaire asked **'To what extent do you agree with our proposed option?'** It invited people to rate their agreement on a scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree and then provide reasons for their answer.



■ Strongly disagree      ■ Tend to disagree  
■ Neither agree or disagree      ■ Tend to agree  
■ Strongly agree      ■ Don't know



Plan showing proposed route options for consultation

## What you told us

- Of the people who completed this section of the questionnaire, 51% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals, with 43% expressing opposition; 6% were neutral or 'don't know'. However, more than half of the 9,243 responses were pro-forma emails of opposition which, if included with the responses to Q1, would increase the proportion in opposition to 78%.
- There was general support for preserving and enhancing the setting of Stonehenge and the WHS. However, archaeological and heritage bodies and others were concerned about the project's impact on the integrity and authenticity of the prehistoric landscape in the west of the WHS.
- Likewise, although there was much support for the benefits for traffic, the local and regional economy, and improving the quality of life in communities currently affected by rat-running, some respondents were concerned that the proposed option was too expensive.
- Some respondents preferred an entirely surface route either inside or outside the WHS.
- There were also suggestions that the route of the project should be much nearer to the existing A303.

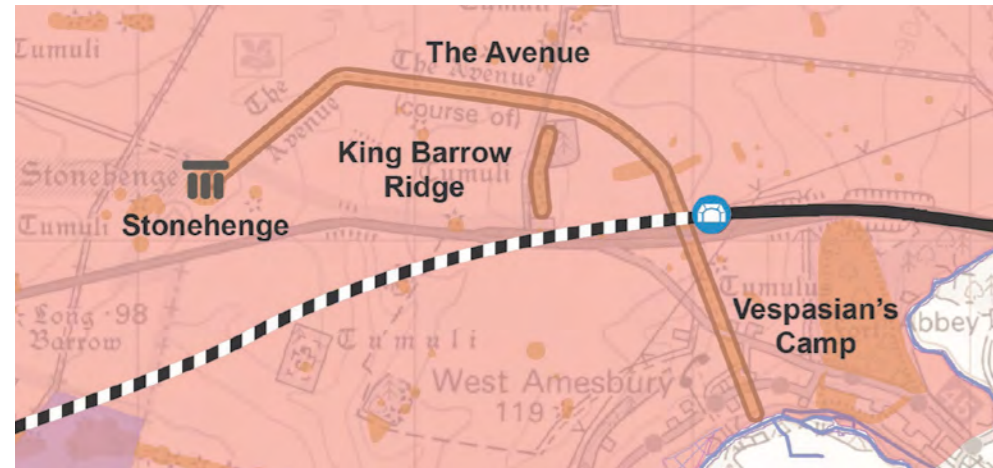
## Our response

- A sensitively designed tunnel, with optimised portal locations, will deliver significant benefits for Stonehenge and the WHS while avoiding unacceptable impacts. The need to minimise the impact on the prehistoric landscape, informed by further surveys and studies, has directly influenced our choice of preferred route.
- The extensive work we did before the consultation showed that a tunnel solution provides the greatest benefits for the South West's economy, the WHS, the environment and local communities within the limits of affordability and value for money set by Government. No other solution gives us an acceptable balance of benefits, impacts and cost.
- A route via the WHS would not be possible without a tunnel. Keeping the existing A303 open past Stonehenge would retain the damaging impact it has on the WHS. It would fail on a fundamental aim of the scheme, namely to remove the sight and sound of traffic from Stonehenge and to improve the connectivity between the northern and southern parts of the WHS.
- Surface routes outside the WHS were discounted before consultation because they would not deliver all the scheme objectives.
- The preferred route and western portal have been moved closer to the existing A303 to mitigate impacts on archaeology and the RSPB reserve at Normanton Down.

## Question 2: The eastern portal

The proposed location for the eastern portal was east of King Barrow Ridge, to keep the route out of sight from Stonehenge, and to the east of The Avenue, to reconnect this monument where it is currently severed by the existing A303.

Our questionnaire asked 'To what extent do you agree with our proposed location of the eastern portal?'. It invited people to rate their agreement on a scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree and then provide reasons for their answer.



Plan showing general area of location for eastern tunnel portal

### What you told us

- Of the people who completed this section of the questionnaire, 49% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed option, with 31% expressing opposition; 20% of the responses were neutral or 'don't know'.
- People generally welcomed putting this portal east of the ancient ceremonial route known as The Avenue so that this part of The Avenue can be reconnected. Some respondents supported its position close to the current road, but others felt the portal should be relocated west of The Avenue, further east towards Countess Roundabout or outside the WHS altogether.
- Concerns were raised about potential cultural and heritage impacts, particularly in relation to the 'Nile Clumps' protected trees, Vespasian's Camp (Iron Age Hillfort) and ancient burial grounds.
- Another issue was the potential impact that construction might have on groundwater flows and the spring at Mesolithic Blick Mead, east of Vespasian's Camp.
- There were mixed opinions about removing the view of Stonehenge from the A303, which some people welcomed on the grounds of road safety, and others were unhappy about.

### Our response

- The portal location is unlikely to be extended much further east because it would have a greater impact on features such as Vespasian's Camp and Blick Mead, and would make the scheme unaffordable by increasing the length of tunnel.
- The location of the eastern portal will be kept under review and optimised as the scheme develops. The details will be presented at the next consultation stage.
- We recognise the importance of Vespasian's Camp and Blick Mead, both nationally and to the Amesbury community locally. The scheme will have to demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable impacts on these sites, including impacts on the water table.
- We understand people's concerns about losing the view of the stones from the roadway. We had to balance it against the need to remove the sight and sound of traffic from Stonehenge which the proposed portal location will achieve.

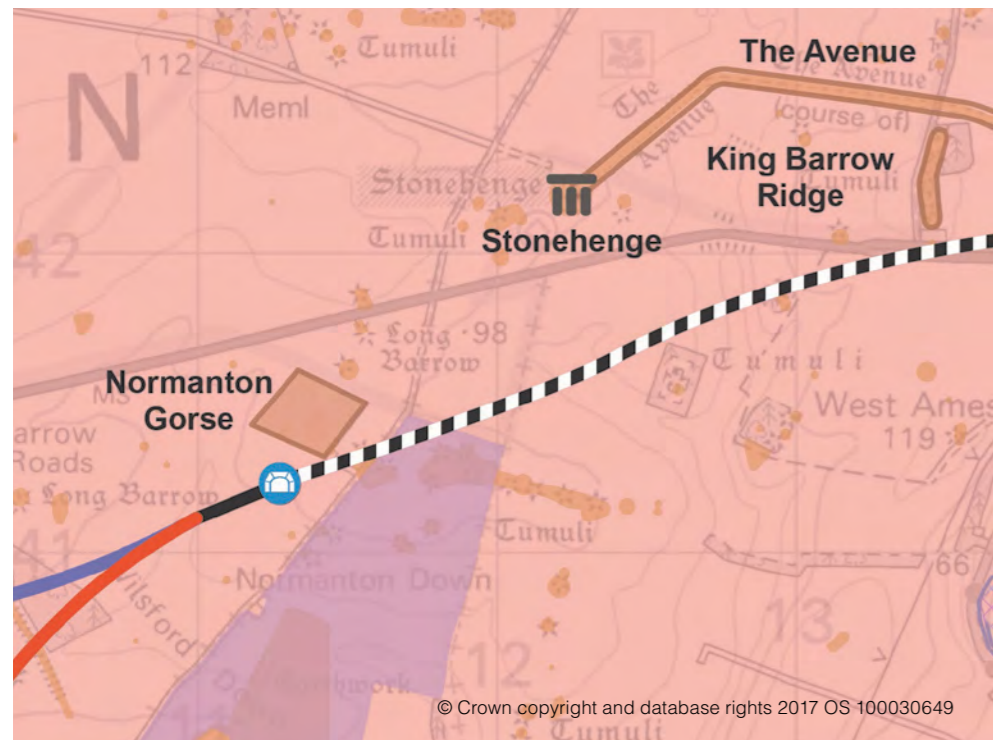




### Question 3: The western portal

The proposed location for the western portal was south west of Normanton Gorse, putting it out of sight from Stonehenge.

Our questionnaire asked 'To what extent do you agree with our proposed location of the western portal?'. It invited people to rate their agreement on a scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree and then provide reasons for their answer.



Plan showing general area of location for western tunnel portal

#### What you told us

- Of the people who completed this section of the questionnaire, 42% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed option, with 38% expressing opposition; 20% of the responses were neutral or 'don't know'.
- Although respondents welcomed the proposals to reduce the impact of the existing road within the WHS, and the opportunity to use natural landform to minimise visual impact, there were major concerns about the portal's proximity to the Normanton Down Barrow Group.
- People were also concerned about the possibility of the road and traffic headlights being visible along the alignment of the winter solstice sunset viewed from Stonehenge.
- Another significant concern was the proximity of the proposed Expressway and western portal in relation to the RSPB reserve at Normanton Down and the nesting sites of the protected stone-curlew population.
- There were suggestions the portal should be moved further west, close to or outside the boundary of the WHS altogether, or closer to the line of the existing A303.

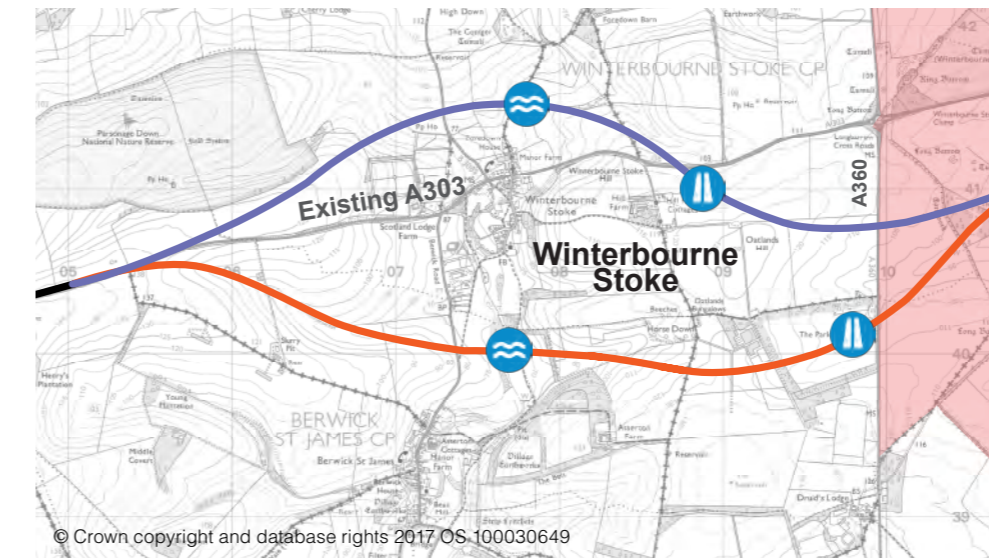
#### Our response

- Considerations about archaeology, the impact on the winter solstice alignment and the proximity to the RSPB reserve, along with the results of recent surveys, have influenced our decision to move the portal location closer to the existing A303.
- The portal location is unlikely to be extended much further west as it would make the scheme unaffordable by increasing the length of tunnel.
- The portal location will be kept under review and optimised as the scheme develops. The details will be presented at the next consultation stage.

### Question 4: Winterbourne Stoke bypass

The village of Winterbourne Stoke is cut in two by the A303. We proposed two possible routes for the bypass - to the north (Option 1N) or to the south (Option 1S) of the village.

Our questionnaire asked 'Of the two possible routes for the Winterbourne Stoke bypass which do you consider is the best route?'. It invited people to indicate their preference for either the north or south route and then provide reasons for their answer.



Route alignment options for Winterbourne Stoke bypass



### What you told us

- There was little disagreement about the need for a bypass, but there were strong local views about which route should be preferred. Of those who expressed a preference, nearly two-thirds favoured the northern route. Around 35% of people who answered this question preferred the northern option while 21% preferred the southern option; 44% had no preference.
- Respondents wanted the viaduct over the River Till kept as low as possible to minimise visual impact whilst also ensuring no adverse effects on the River Till floodplain and associated groundwater regime.
- There were concerns about traffic noise levels and economic impacts on the communities of Berwick St James and Winterbourne Stoke.
- There were also concerns about potential impacts on the ecology and amenity of the Till valley, with the river being a Site of Special Scientific Interest and part of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation.
- Issues raised in relation to the northern option included potential impacts on the Parsonage Down National Nature Reserve and the scheduled barrow groups to the north of Winterbourne Stoke.
- For the northern option in particular, there were concerns about the location of the junction between the A303 and A360. People felt it needed to give suitable access to the A360 while minimising the possibility of rat-running along the B3083 between Shrewton and Winterbourne Stoke.

### Our response

- The height of the viaduct will be considered as part of the continued development of the scheme and details will be presented at the next consultation stage.
- The groundwater and flood regime will also continue to be an important consideration as the scheme develops. There must be no adverse effects.
- Considerations about noise, the economy, ecology, visual impacts, archaeology and the junction with the A360 have directly influenced our preferred route, along with the results of recent surveys.
- On balance, the northern option performs best against these considerations and is our preferred route. The location and design of the A360 junction will continue to be reviewed and optimised as part of the ongoing scheme design.



### Question 5: A303/A345 Countess junction

We proposed to build a new junction here that separates the traffic going east-west along the A303 from traffic going north-south along the A345 Countess Road, possibly using a flyover above the existing roundabout.

Our questionnaire asked ‘**What are the most important issues for you as we develop our proposals for the A303/A345 Countess junction?**’

### What you told us

- There was support for a free-flowing junction and the associated benefits it would bring for the local community. In general, respondents agreed that full traffic movements between the A345 Countess Road and the A303 should be maintained. But there was concern that a flyover would increase traffic noise and visual intrusion for people living nearby, with several suggestions about alternative solutions.
- Locally, people were generally opposed to any notion of combining the A345 Countess junction and the Solstice Park junction, a short distance to the east, due to the concern that this might lead to rat-running through nearby communities.
- Respondents were also concerned about the potential impact on archaeology, such as nearby Blick Mead.

### Our response

- All options for making improvements at Countess Roundabout will be considered at the next stage of the scheme’s development, ensuring no conflict with the operation of the Solstice Park junction and taking account of feedback about potential impacts. The optimised solution will be presented at the next consultation stage.

## Question 6: A303/A360 Longbarrow junction

We proposed a new junction that would separate traffic going east-west along the A303 from traffic going north-south along the A360. It would also connect Winterbourne Stoke to the A360 and the new A303. Its location would depend on the choice of bypass for Winterbourne Stoke.

Our questionnaire asked 'What are the most important issues for you as we develop our proposals for the A303/A360 Longbarrow junction?'

### What you told us

- There was general support for a junction which allows A303 traffic to flow straight through freely while accommodating full movement to and from the A360.
- People felt the junction location associated with the northern bypass route should be moved closer to the line of the existing A360 to prevent traffic from the direction of Shrewton using the B3083 as a shortcut.
- There were concerns that the junction location associated with the southern bypass route would intrude on the winter solstice sunset sightline as viewed from Stonehenge.

### Our response

- A360 junction considerations have directly influenced our preferred route, along with the results of recent surveys and studies.
- Further design work will help us optimise the junction location for access while limiting the possibility of rat-running
- Our preferred route, running alongside the existing A303, removes any risk of the junction intruding on the important winter solstice sunset alignment.



# 5 Developments following consultation

The consultation gave thousands of people a chance to raise important issues and tell us how they think this unique scheme should develop. There is no doubt that the comments we received from people, groups and organisations across and outside the UK have helped us improve the scheme.

Here we look at the material considerations that came out of consultation and how we have responded to these with the help of further surveys and assessments.

## The route through the western part of the World Heritage Site Discovery of new archaeology

During our programme of archaeological surveys, we found evidence of two Neolithic long barrows and a small ceremonial burial site (hengiform), that were previously unknown, in an area of the WHS south-east of the current junction with the A360. Our original option for a northern bypass of Winterbourne Stoke (Option 1N) passed close to these monuments, raising concerns about potential damage to these archaeological features. By realigning the route to follow the existing A303 more closely, our preferred route avoids these newly discovered sites. It is also shorter and, because

## Finds from our archaeological surveys



Ground stone axe fragment

Polished axe fragment reused as a hammer-stone.

Prehistoric pottery - Mortlake type Peterborough Ware

Prehistoric pottery. Collared urn

the route has already been surveyed for a scheme that was proposed in 2004, the risk of encountering as yet undiscovered archaeology is reduced.

## The winter solstice

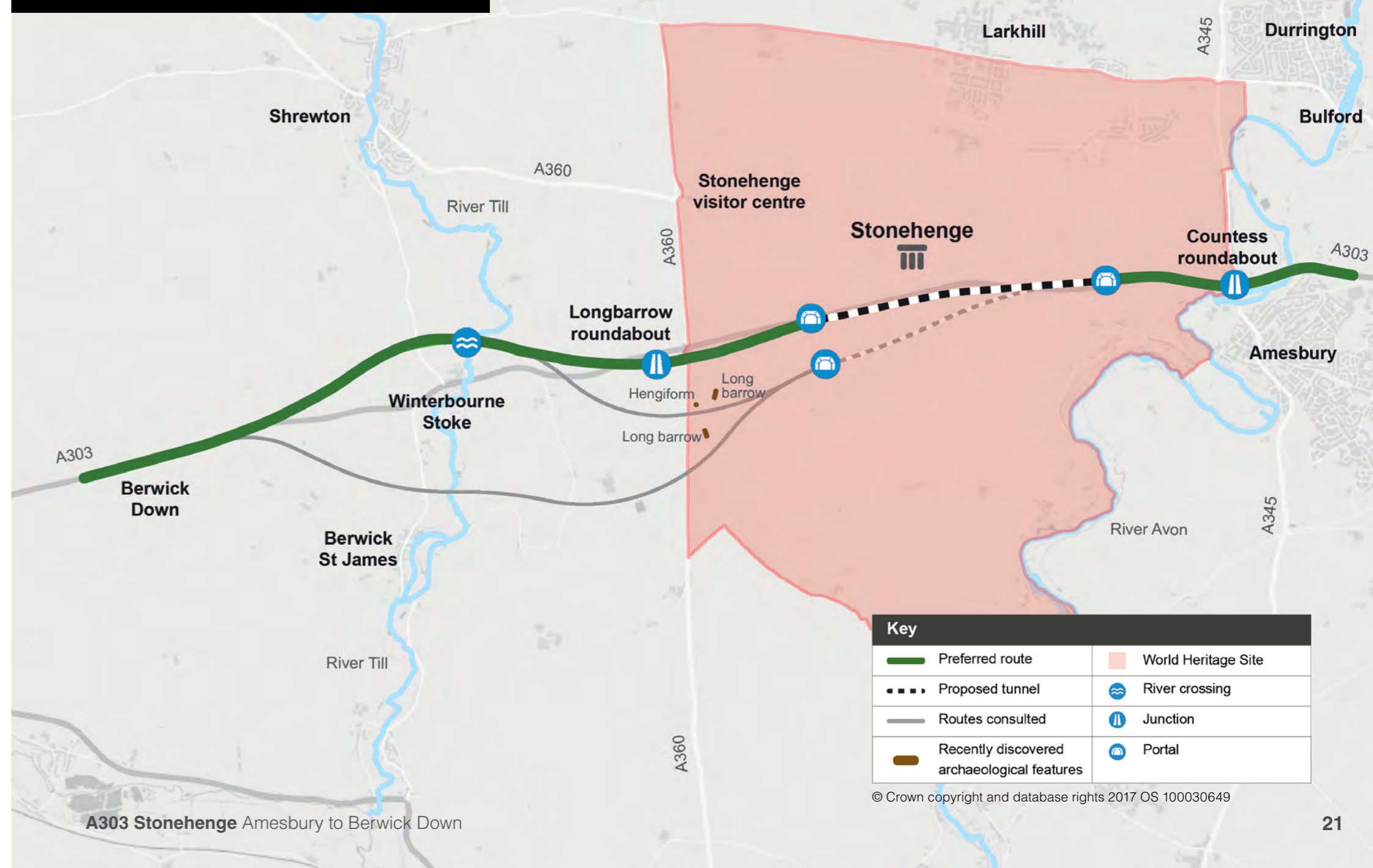
Our proposed southern bypass route (Option 1S) ran along the alignment of the setting sun as viewed from Stonehenge during the winter solstice, perhaps the most important sightline in the WHS. Our preferred route puts the new road away from the winter solstice sunset alignment.

## RSPB reserve and stone-curlew breeding sites

Although we carefully avoided the RSPB reserve at Normanton Down, with its stone-curlew breeding sites, our original proposals were near it. The stone-curlew is a protected species and one of the reasons Salisbury Plain is a Special Protection Area (SPA) for wildlife. Our preferred route is further from the RSPB reserve and avoids passing through Diamond Wood and severing habitats for other wildlife.

**These considerations have been key influences in our choice of preferred route through the western part of the WHS.**

Comparison of preferred route and consultation options



Key	
	Preferred route
	Proposed tunnel
	Routes consulted
	Recently discovered archaeological features
	World Heritage Site
	River crossing
	Junction
	Portal

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### **A northern vs southern bypass for Winterbourne Stoke**

#### **Quality of village life**

The southern bypass route option, which runs between Berwick St James and Winterbourne Stoke would be a physical intrusion between the two closely-neighbouring villages.

#### **Biodiversity**

The River Till is a winterbourne (a stream or river that is generally dry in the summer months) where the northern bypass option crosses it, so there would be less risk of impact on the Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest than further south, where it runs all year. Even though the northern route will run close to the Parsonage Down National Nature Reserve, overall it is a better option in terms of protecting biodiversity.

#### **Access and rat-running**

The right location for the junction of the new bypass with the A360 will be critical. Our preferred route takes the northern bypass nearer to the A303. This gives us more flexibility to place the junction closer to the A360 to dissuade drivers from using the B3083 as a short cut, but far enough away to reduce impacts on the WHS.

**Before consultation the northern and southern options were evenly balanced in terms of their benefits and impacts. The feedback you gave us, backed up by extra information from surveys, helped us decide the northern route as the preferred bypass option for Winterbourne Stoke.**

### **Considerations which have not affected the choice of route**

Matters raised about the scheme east of Stonehenge, including the eastern tunnel portal and junction with the A345, were less to do with the choice of route and more to do with design decisions which have yet to be made. We will take everything people have said into account when considering design and mitigation measures in the next stage of the project's development. You will get another chance to comment when we consult on our more detailed proposals in early 2018.

## 6 The preferred route

The map on the next page shows our preferred route, which has been confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport. It is a result of your feedback, as well as additional surveys and assessments we have carried out. It consists of:

- A new junction between the A303 and A345 accommodating free-flowing A303 and A345 traffic movements.
- A twin-bore tunnel at least 1.8 miles (2.9 kilometres) long.
- A new junction to the west of and outside the World Heritage Site (WHS) accommodating free-flowing A303 and A360 traffic movements, as well as a link to Winterbourne Stoke.
- A bypass to the north of Winterbourne Stoke.

### **About the preferred route**

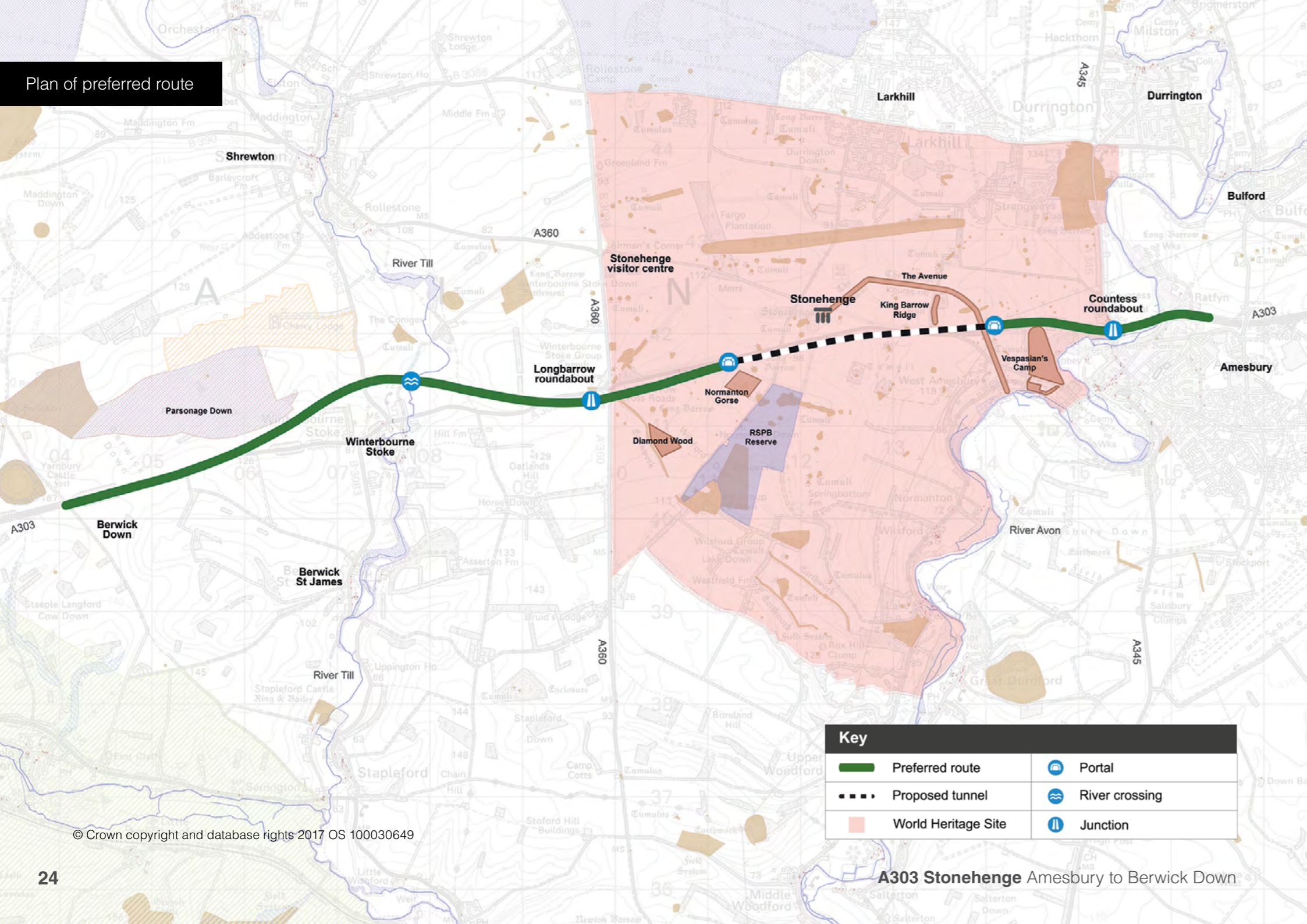
Although the route has been partly modified since consultation, the key features of the scheme remain the same. It is still a twin-bore tunnel with portals and approach roads within the WHS, plus junctions with the A345 and A360 either side of the WHS and a bypass for Winterbourne Stoke.

There has been no change to the eastern section of the route, meaning the location and design of the eastern tunnel portal and the A345 junction we proposed at consultation will now be optimised, along with the other elements of the scheme, as part of its ongoing development.

However, the western portal and the route in the western part of the WHS are now much closer to the line of the current A303. This avoids many important archaeological sites, including the newly-discovered barrows just

to the east of the A360. The modified alignment also avoids any risk of the road intruding on the view of the setting sun from Stonehenge during the winter solstice.

Before consultation there was no clear preferred bypass option for Winterbourne. You have helped us decide that the northern route is the preferred option.



## 7 Themes raised in consultation

As well as the comments relating specifically to the questions on our questionnaire, we received a wide range of other feedback. All the feedback received was analysed and grouped into themes. Here is an overview of the most prominent and frequent comments by theme and our responses to them.

Where comments relate to matters that have yet to be decided, such as layout and detailed design, we will keep these in mind as we continue the scheme's development. There will be chance to comment on these more detailed plans in early 2018, before we submit an application for development consent.

### Alternative solutions

#### You said

Many respondents agreed something needs to be done to address the problems on the A303, but differed over the best solution. Suggestions included: upgrading the existing road by simply dualling it; moving the road within the World Heritage Site (WHS) and screening it from the stones; creating a route outside or away from the WHS entirely; or, building longer or shorter tunnels.

There were also suggestions for options that do not involve building new roads at all; for instance, rail improvements or local traffic management.

#### Our response

The A303 is a strategic route between the South East and South West regions but is frequently congested, particularly near Stonehenge. Alternative transport measures would do little to address the problems.

The Government's aim is to make the A303 a continuous dual carriageway Expressway between the M3 and the M5 at Taunton, improving journey times and boosting regional economic growth and productivity. Upgrading the section between Amesbury and Berwick Down is an essential part of this aim.

The existing A303 is already damaging the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS. Keeping it would not address one of the fundamental aims of the scheme, namely to remove the sight and sound of traffic from Stonehenge and reconnect the northern and southern parts of the WHS.

**For full detailed information and analysis of all the consultation feedback and our responses to it please see the *A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down: Report on Public Consultation – September 2017*.**

A dual carriageway through the WHS without a tunnel, no matter how well landscaped or screened, would unacceptably damage the OUV and would not receive consent, because it goes against national and local planning policies.

A longer tunnel, extending close to or beyond the width of the WHS, cannot be delivered within the limits of affordability and value for money set by Government. A short tunnel, just like a scheme without a tunnel, would unacceptably damage the OUV of the WHS.

Surface routes outside the WHS were ruled out before consultation because they would not deliver the scheme objectives. For instance, the option just south of the WHS would run through nearly 14 miles of largely tranquil, high quality, unspoilt countryside. This would necessitate crossings of the Till Valley between Berwick St James and Winterbourne Stoke and of the Woodford Valley between Great Durnford and Upper Woodford on substantial viaducts. Both are a Special Area of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The overall environmental impact would be much greater, in terms of effects on local communities, conservation areas, listed buildings, landscape, biodiversity and environmentally designated sites, and with risks of impact on an area rich in archaeology despite being outside the boundary of the WHS.

Journey times, travel costs, incidents of accidents and emissions would be higher. Also, because the route doesn't link to existing local roads near the current A303, there would be more traffic and rat-running on those roads rather than less.



**Before**



**After**

## Cultural heritage

### You said

Many respondents raised concerns about the need to avoid or minimise damage to known and unknown archaeology, particularly features of OUV in the WHS, but also some features outside it. This included comments that the project would contravene planning policy and the World Heritage Convention.

On the other hand, some felt that cultural heritage considerations were being given too much weight.

### Our response

Helping to conserve and enhance the WHS is a key objective of this project. The preferred route has been selected on the basis of heritage assessments showing that the scheme brings benefits without creating unacceptable impacts. We have already done surveys to assess these impacts and more will be carried out as the scheme develops and before construction. The scheme is being promoted in accordance with the Government's Road Investment Strategy and our proposals will comply with planning policies.

While heritage considerations are very important, all other relevant transport, economic, environmental and community considerations have also been taken into account and assessed against the scheme objectives and the Government's National Policy Statement for National Networks.

## Construction

### You said

There were concerns about the potential impacts of building a tunnel - such as vibration, effects on the water table, noise and pollution.

There were also concerns about loss of amenity and road safety issues inside and outside the WHS due to temporary increased congestion and rat-running while the new road is being built. Some respondents feared delays caused by archaeological discoveries could prolong the construction period.

There were general requests for information about mitigation measures, including in relation to surplus material excavated from the tunnel.

### Our response

Construction methods and phasing will be developed at the next stage of the scheme's design, to make sure disruption is minimised. At the next consultation stage, we'll be able to explain mitigation measures, such as how we intend to limit the impact of spoil removal, noise, vibration and the movement of construction traffic.

We will carry out extensive surveys where ground will be disturbed, so that archaeological finds can be rescued and investigated before intrusive earthworks take place. Neither Stonehenge itself, nor other scheduled features in the WHS, will be under any risk of disturbance through construction, or during the future operation and maintenance of the new road.

## Consultation process

### You said

Although many respondents found the consultation helpful, some questioned specific aspects, such as: the length of the consultation; the level of information provided; and a view that exhibitions should have been held nationally.

Some respondents expressed doubt that their views would be taken into account. Some believed that transport and economic benefits were being prioritised over heritage, environment or community benefits. Others thought priority should be given to local community benefits rather than to the WHS.

### Our response

This non-statutory consultation has been carried out at an early stage in the scheme's development to help select a preferred route and inform its ongoing development. It was designed following best practice guidance, mirroring the requirements of statutory consultation. We considered the duration, extent and level of engagement carefully to keep it proportionate to the purpose, scale and likely interest in this unique project. This was backed up with a high standard of clarity, balance and accessibility in our materials, which received many favourable comments from those attending the exhibitions. However, we will continue to review how we can make improvements for the next round of consultation.

Every comment we received has been taken into account as part of our assessment of the preferred route and will continue to be reviewed as we move into the next stage of scheme development. No comment was prioritised ahead of another. All were considered on their individual merit against the scheme objectives and Government policy.



A303 Stonehenge Amesbury to Berwick Down

## Economic performance

### You said

Some respondents felt the proposed option was prohibitively expensive and/or a waste of money. There was also an opposing view that the current budget significantly understated the economic and heritage value of the WHS.

### Our response

The Government's aim is to dual the remaining single-carriageway sections of the A303 as part of an Expressway to the South West. To meet this ambition, it has committed to making funds available for the A303 Stonehenge project.

Our rigorous assessment shows that, for the budget set by the Government, a tunnel brings the greatest benefits for the South West's economy, the WHS, the environment and local communities and that these justify its cost. The scheme's value for money includes assessing the economic and cultural value that people place on improving the WHS.

## Engineering design

### You said

Some respondents felt the tunnel would be safe but others were concerned about what would happen in the event of an accident, fire or terrorist incident.

### Our response

The tunnel and road past Stonehenge will be designed to the highest safety standards. The emergency services are being fully engaged in the design so they can be wholly confident in the contingency and response planning arrangements. This will be consistent with best practice employed on tunnels elsewhere in the UK and internationally.

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## Environmental impacts

### You said

Some respondents raised the potential impact of noise, light and air quality on the environment, communities and cultural heritage. There were specific concerns about noise from elevated sections of road, for instance if a flyover is proposed for the A303/A345 junction, and from the Winterbourne Stoke bypass.

There were concerns about potential loss of wildlife habitat, with the Normanton Down RSPB reserve and the Rivers Avon and Till highlighted.

### Our response

We will carry out more environmental, community and heritage assessments during the next stage of the scheme's development. These will inform the mitigation measures we will put in place to minimise the effects of the scheme. The details will be presented at the next consultation stage.

Our working assumption is that there will be no lighting within the WHS outside the tunnel.

## Land acquisition

### You said

Some respondents felt the route and junction arrangements should be designed to take the least possible amount of agricultural land.

There were several specific requests from landholders regarding the need to maintain access to their landholdings.

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### Our response

Our preferred route runs closer to the existing A303 for more of its length. This makes it shorter than the proposals we presented at consultation, requiring less land and creating less severance and disruption on landholdings.

Access to farms and businesses severed by the alignment, or in close to proximity to the scheme, will be an important consideration in the scheme's continuing development. Discussions will be held with those affected to agree how accesses will be maintained.

### Legacy left by the scheme

#### You said

There were questions about how public rights-of-way will be maintained. People in Winterbourne Stoke and Amesbury were keen to understand how their communities could benefit from the scheme.

#### Our response

Rights-of-way affected by the scheme will remain the responsibility of Wiltshire Council. We will liaise with the Council to discuss how they can be best maintained and improved for all users. We aim to downgrade the existing A303 between the A360 and Stonehenge Road, Amesbury to a 'green' byway for non-motorised use, save for occasional agricultural and utility vehicles which need access to nearby land and services.

We will set up a forum with communities directly affected by and adjacent to the scheme. This will discuss and agree proposals to secure the best legacy we can deliver for those communities.

### Traffic and transport

#### You said

There were concerns about how successful the scheme will be at easing congestion and rat-running on surrounding roads, particularly if the tunnel is closed.

Some respondents asked about provisions for cyclists or pedestrians in the tunnel.

#### Our response

Our analysis shows that removing congestion along the A303 past Stonehenge will reduce rat-running on surrounding roads.

The tunnel will be constructed with twin-bores, one for eastbound traffic and the other westbound. It will be capable of operating contra-flow during planned and unplanned closures, so that local roads don't need to be used for diversions, except in exceptional circumstances. Unlike the existing single carriageway, which is more likely to be totally closed during an incident, the dual carriageway will be more resilient and flexible.

Neither cyclists nor pedestrians will be allowed in the tunnel. They will use the new 'green' byway proposed between the A360 and Stonehenge Road, Amesbury, instead. Pedestrians will also be able to move freely and safely along rights-of-way between the north and south of the WHS without needing to cross the A303 as they do today.

## 8 What happens next

There will be another opportunity to give your views on our proposals before we submit them for development consent.

But before then we still have a lot of work to do. We have to carry out more surveys and studies to help us refine and design our preferred route in detail.

Throughout the process we will keep talking and listening to everyone with an interest in the scheme. There will also be regular updates and information on our website at [www.highways.gov.uk/a303stonehenge](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a303stonehenge).

### The next public consultation

Our next consultation will be statutory, which means it is required by law. In this case the law is the Planning Act 2008. The consultation will focus on our detailed proposals for the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down.

Your feedback from that consultation will allow us to make sure we have got the best scheme, or highlight where we still need to make changes, before we make our application for a Development Consent Order (DCO). A DCO is a special type of planning permission for projects of national significance such as this Stonehenge project.

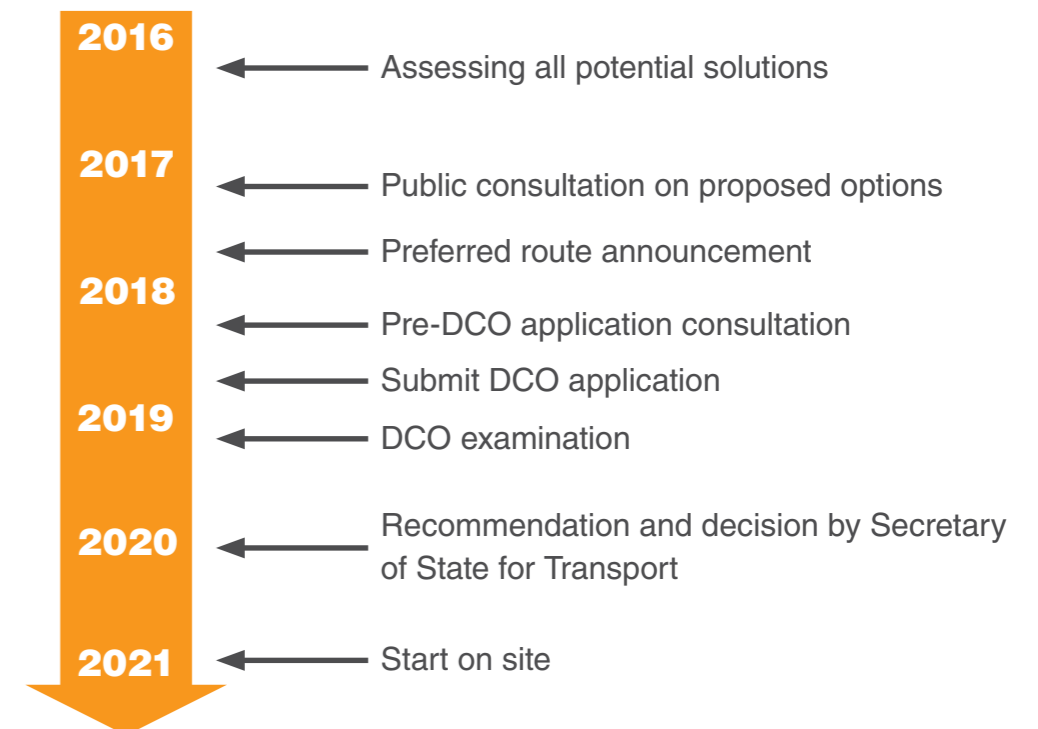
There is more information about the DCO process at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>

### Timeline and DCO process

We are hoping to submit our DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate in late 2018. If they accept the application, there will be a detailed examination of the proposed scheme in which the public can participate.

This examination will take up to 6 months. The Planning Inspectorate then has 3 months to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who then has a further 3 months to make a decision.

### Timeline



## 9 How to find out more

To read the full report of our 2017 consultation, please see our website [www.highways.gov.uk/a303stonehengepra](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a303stonehengepra).

There is also lots more information to help you understand the need to upgrade the A303 corridor, the section near Stonehenge in particular and the work we have done so far.



Here is a list of documents you might find interesting:

### About the Expressway to the South West

- Creating an Expressway to the South West: The case for the A303/A358 Corridor

### About the A303 Stonehenge scheme

- A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down: The case for the scheme
- A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down: Technical Appraisal Report – January 2017
- A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down: Public Consultation Booklet – January 2017
- A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down: Report on Public Consultation – September 2017
- A303 Stonehenge, Amesbury to Berwick Down: Scheme Assessment Report – September 2017

## 10 Contact us

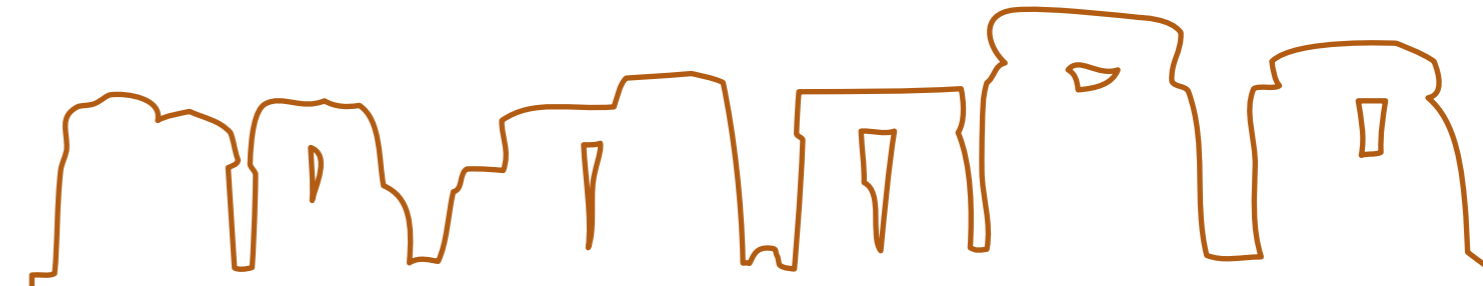
Visit our webpages for information about the scheme or call or email us to find out more.

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 0300 123 5000

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