

# A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down

TR010025

## 6.1 Environmental Statement

### Chapter 1: Introduction

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed  
Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

October 2018



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the report

- 1.1.1 This document is an Environmental Statement (ES) which presents a description of the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down scheme (the Scheme), the likely significant environmental effects of the Scheme, the measures to avoid or reduce such effects and the alternatives considered.
- 1.1.2 This ES is submitted as part of the application for development consent for the Scheme under the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (Ref 1.1) (PA 2008) and is produced in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning Environmental Impact Assessment 2017 Regulations (the EIA Regulations) (Ref 1.2).

## 1.2 Overview of the project

- 1.2.1 The Scheme forms part of a programme of improvements for upgrading the A303/A358 corridor, improving this vital connection between the South West and London and the South East and including the upgrade of remaining single carriageway sections on the route to dual carriageway. This investment is stated as a priority project in the National Infrastructure Plan and Government's commitment is confirmed in the Road Investment Strategy (2015-2020).
- 1.2.2 The Scheme would provide a high quality, two-lane dual carriageway on the A303 trunk road between Amesbury and Berwick Down in Wiltshire. The Scheme would resolve traffic problems and, at the same time, protect and enhance the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site ("WHS"). The Scheme would be approximately 8 miles (13km) long and comprise the following key components:
- a) a northern bypass of Winterbourne Stoke with a viaduct over the River Till valley;
  - b) a new junction between the A303 and A360 to the west of and outside the WHS, replacing the existing Longbarrow roundabout;
  - c) a twin-bore tunnel approximately 2 miles (3.3km) long, past Stonehenge; and
  - d) a new junction between the A303 and A345 at the existing Countess roundabout.

- 1.2.3 Further information is provided within Chapter 2 (The Scheme).

## 1.3 Legislative and policy framework

### Planning Act 2008

- 1.3.1 The Scheme is defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), as it consists of the construction of a highway under sections 14(1)(h) and 22(1)(a) of the PA 2008, together with associated development and other

ancillary matters. Further detail concerning the Scheme's qualification as an NSIP can be found in the prescribed form within the Application Form (Ref 1.3) and in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Draft Development Consent Order (Ref 1.4).

- 1.3.2 In accordance with the legislation, a Development Consent Order (DCO) is required to allow the construction and operation of the Scheme.

### The EIA Regulations

- 1.3.3 The Scheme is considered to be 'EIA development' and specifically a Schedule 1 development under the EIA Regulations and is therefore subject to an EIA, the findings of which are reported in this ES. The Scheme falls within Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations 2017 (Ref 1.2) on the basis that it is:

*"Construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or realignment and/or widening of an existing road of two lanes or less so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new road, or realigned and/or widened section of road, would be 10 kilometres or more in a continuous length". (Schedule 1, Paragraph 7 (3))*

- 1.3.4 In accordance with Regulation 8(1)(b) of the EIA Regulations, Highways England has notified the Secretary of State for Transport (Secretary of State) in a letter to the Planning Inspectorate (The Inspectorate) dated 20th October 2017 that an ES presenting the findings of the EIA will be submitted with the DCO application.

- 1.3.5 An EIA Scoping Report was submitted to The Inspectorate on 20th October 2017 (the EIA Scoping Report) and can be viewed at the following link:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010025/TR010025-000032-Scoping%20Report.pdf>

- 1.3.6 The Inspectorate reviewed and consulted on the EIA Scoping Report and published a Scoping Opinion on 30th November 2017 (the Scoping Opinion). The Scoping Opinion is provided at Appendix 4.1 and can be viewed at the following link:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010025/TR010025-000039-STON%20-%20Scoping%20Opinion.pdf>

- 1.3.7 Highways England acknowledges the comments of The Inspectorate given within the Scoping Opinion and also notes the comments provided by the statutory consultees to The Inspectorate in Appendix 2 to the Scoping Opinion along with the late consultation response published on 30th November 2017. Both the Scoping Opinion and the comments from the consultees have been considered in undertaking the EIA and in preparing this ES.

- 1.3.8 The individual technical chapters within this ES provide a tabulated summary of Scoping comments relevant to that topic. Scoping comments in relation to ES Chapters 1 to 4 are provided within Appendix 4.1. Where assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the Scoping Opinion, a response and the relevant ES Section is provided; where the approach is not in accordance with the Scoping Opinion, this has been discussed with The Inspectorate and, in accordance with their advice, agreed with the relevant consultees. In these instances, an explanation is provided within the topic chapter scoping tables.
- 1.3.9 Highways England has maintained ongoing dialogue with The Inspectorate and other relevant statutory consultees in order to ensure that the scope of the EIA is proportionate and meets the requirements of the EIA Regulations. The scope of the EIA for each topic has been discussed and agreed with the relevant statutory consultees and this is stated within individual technical chapters as relevant.

### **Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)**

- 1.3.10 Under Regulation 12 of the Infrastructure EIA Regulations 2017, the Applicant is required to set out in its Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC) how it intends to publicise and consult on preliminary environmental information relating to the proposed development. Regulation 12 defines preliminary environmental information as being the information referred to in Regulation 14(2) which has been compiled by the Applicant; and is reasonably required for the consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant effects of the development (and of any associated development).
- 1.3.11 The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) was published in February 2018 and presented the environmental information collected together with the preliminary findings of the assessment of likely significant environmental effects of the Scheme at the time.
- 1.3.12 The feedback received from consultees during the consultation period on the PEIR has been used to inform the assessment and scheme design.

### **The decision maker and planning policy**

- 1.3.13 The Localism Act 2011 provided the authority for the Secretary of State to be responsible for the processing of DCO applications for NSIPs, with the power to appoint The Inspectorate. In its role, The Inspectorate will examine the application for the Scheme and then will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will then decide whether to grant a DCO.
- 1.3.14 In accordance with section 104(2)(a) of the PA 2008, the Secretary of State is required to have regard to the relevant National Policy Statement (NPS), amongst other matters, when deciding the application. The relevant NPS for the Scheme is the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN) (Ref 1.5). The NPS provides guidance for promoters of NSIPs and also provides the basis for examination by the Examining Authority (The Inspectorate in this instance) and decision making by the Secretary of State.

- 1.3.15 Chapters 5 to 15 include the relevant assessment paragraphs from the NPSNN and where the requirements of those paragraphs are addressed within the ES. The Scheme's compliance with the NPS is set out in the NPSNN compliance table submitted with the application (Application Document 7.1).
- 1.3.16 The Secretary of State will also consider other important and relevant national and local planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in July 2018 (Ref 1.6) is relevant national planning policy. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The Framework replaces the previous NPPF published in March 2012.
- 1.3.17 The local planning policy relevant to the Scheme consists of the following adopted plans:
- a) Wiltshire Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted January 2015 (Ref 1.7);
  - b) Saved policies of the Salisbury District Local Plan 2011 adopted in 2003 (Ref 1.8);
  - c) Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2006-2026 adopted 2009 (Ref 1.9); and
  - d) Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2006-2026 adopted 2009 (Ref 1.10).
- 1.3.18 The EIA Scoping Report submitted to The Inspectorate described the national and local planning policies relevant to the assessment with a summary provided for each environmental topic. These policies are restated within this ES. The purpose of considering relevant planning policy during the EIA is twofold:
- a) To identify policy that could influence the sensitivity of receptors (and therefore the significance of effects) and any requirements for mitigation; and
  - b) To identify planning policy that could influence the methodology of the EIA. For example, a planning policy may require the assessment of a particular impact or the use of a particular methodology.

## 1.4 The applicant

- 1.4.1 Highways England is the Strategic Highways Company as defined in the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is charged with modernising and maintaining England's strategic road network, as well as running the network and keeping traffic moving. Highways England is the applicant under the Planning Act 2008.

## 1.5 Competent expert evidence

- 1.5.1 The EIA Regulations require that the ES is prepared by 'competent experts' (Regulation 14 (4)(a)). The EIA was undertaken by AECOM on behalf of

Highways England. AECOM has been awarded the EIA Quality Mark from the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), demonstrating competency in ES preparation.

- 1.5.2 The EIA was undertaken by competent experts with the relevant and appropriate experience in their respective topics. The EIA technical leads responsible for the individual chapters are summarised at the start of each chapter and the professional qualifications and experience of each are given in Appendix 1.1. The overall EIA Lead and competent expert responsible for the ES is Steve McQuade. Details of his qualifications and experience are included in Appendix 1.1.

## 1.6 Stakeholder engagement

### Context

- 1.6.1 Stakeholder engagement for the Scheme has been based on the following principles:

- a) Early and ongoing engagement which has informed and influenced the Scheme development process;
- b) Seeking an appropriate level of feedback at each stage in the iterative design process and ensuring that comments received have been taken into consideration;
- c) Building of long-term relationships with key stakeholders throughout the different stages of the Scheme to help better understand their views;
- d) Where possible and practicable ensuring concerns have been addressed; and
- e) Ensuring appropriate statutory consultation has been undertaken in accordance with requirements of the PA 2008 and associated guidance. Statutory consultation was held between February and April 2018 (see below for details).

### Consultation to date

- 1.6.2 Non-statutory public consultation on two route options, Option '1N' and Option '1S' took place between January and March 2017 as part of the Preferred Route Announcement for the Scheme. Both options involved a 2.9km tunnel, but with northern and southern options to bypass Winterbourne Stoke. The purpose of this consultation was to seek feedback from the stakeholders, including the local community, on the two options identified via the options identification and selection process.
- 1.6.3 The responses to this consultation were considered in identifying the Preferred Route as documented in the consultation report (Ref 1.11) and the Preferred Route Announcement Brochure (Ref 1.12).

- 1.6.4 In addition to the non-statutory public consultation, ongoing engagement has taken place between the project team and key stakeholders, including local landowners, Wiltshire Council, environmental bodies and heritage groups.
- 1.6.5 Working groups have been set up with key stakeholders associated with a number of technical disciplines, including heritage, landscape and biodiversity. These are advisory groups and allow the project team to work closely with stakeholders as the Scheme design develops. Stakeholder engagement activities undertaken for each of the technical topics considered herein are presented within Chapters 5 to 14 of this ES.
- 1.6.6 The statutory consultation for the Scheme was held over a ten week period between Thursday 8th February 2018 and Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018 to enable the public to review the draft proposals and provide feedback. A PEIR was prepared for that consultation and provided a preliminary view of the likely significant environmental effects of the Scheme, based on the assessments that had been undertaken to that point.
- 1.6.7 Further targeted consultation was held during 17<sup>th</sup> July to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2018 to seek feedback on aspects of the Scheme design that had been amended as a result of design development in response to comments received during the statutory consultation.
- 1.6.8 The comments received in response to the statutory and targeted consultation exercises have been used to produce a Consultation Report in accordance with section 37 of the PA 2008, which is included as part of the DCO application. The Consultation Report accompanies the application and summarises the views and comments received and outlines how regard has been had to those comments in the Scheme design and the EIA. The responses relating to the five design options which were included within the statutory consultation are discussed within Chapter 3 Alternatives. Consultation was undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations as set out in the Consultation Report.

## 1.7 Structure of this Environmental Statement

- 1.7.1 The main text of this ES divides into four parts:
- a) Chapters 1 to 4 describe the Scheme, the alternatives considered and the approach taken to the EIA (including consideration of Major Events and Population and Health Impacts).
  - b) Chapters 5 to 14 present the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme in relation to ten specialist topics covering particular aspects of the environment.
  - c) Chapter 15 considers the potential inter-relationships between the topics covered in Chapters 5 to 14, and between the Scheme and other developments in the surrounding area, which together have the potential to generate cumulative effects.

- d) Chapter 16 presents a summary of the likely significant environmental effects.

1.7.2 The specialist topics covered in Chapters 5 to 14 of this ES are:

- a) Chapter 5 Air quality
- b) Chapter 6 Cultural Heritage
- c) Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual
- d) Chapter 8 Biodiversity
- e) Chapter 9 Noise and Vibration
- f) Chapter 10 Geology and Soils
- g) Chapter 11 Road Drainage and the Water Environment
- h) Chapter 12 Material Assets and Waste
- i) Chapter 13 People and Communities
- j) Chapter 14 Climate

1.7.3 This main ES report constitutes Volume I of the ES and comprises Application Document 6.1 of the DCO Application. The figures and drawings are presented in Volume II (Application Document 6.2), and the Technical Appendices are presented in Volume III (Application Document 6.3).

1.7.4 A separate document has also been prepared to provide a non-technical summary (NTS) of this ES. This can be found in Application Document 6.4.

1.7.5 A glossary and a list of abbreviations are included at the start of this ES. References are provided at the back of this ES.

1.7.6 Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations sets out the information which is to be included in the ES. Table 1.1 identifies where the information defined by Schedule 4 can be found within this ES.

**Table 1.1: Location of information within this ES**

Specified Information	Location within the ES
1. A description of the development, comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development, including in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. a description of the location of the development;</li> <li>b. a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;</li> <li>c. a description of the main characteristics of the operational</li> </ul>	Chapter 2 The Scheme

Specified Information	Location within the ES
<p>phase of the development (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used;</p> <p>d. an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.</p>	
<p>2. A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.</p>	<p>Chapter 3 Assessment of Alternatives</p>
<p>3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.</p>	<p>Chapter 5 to Chapter 14</p>
<p>4. A description of the factors specified in regulation 5(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.</p>	<p>Chapter 5 to Chapter 14</p>
<p>5. A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works;</li> <li>b. the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources;</li> <li>c. the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste;</li> <li>d. the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters);</li> <li>e. the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources;</li> <li>f. the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change;</li> <li>g. the technologies and the substances used.</li> </ul> <p>The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in regulation 5(2) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term,</p>	<p>Chapter 5 to Chapter 16</p>

Specified Information	Location within the ES
medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development. This description should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union or Member State level which are relevant to the project, including in particular those established under Council Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC.	
6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	Chapter 4 (EIA methodology); Chapter 5 to Chapter 14
7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	Chapter 5 to Chapter 14 (Mitigation and residual effects sections)
8. A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to EU legislation such as Directive 2012/18/EU(3) of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom(4) or UK environmental assessments may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.	Chapter 4 and Appendix 4.2.
9. A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 8.	Non-technical Summary
10. A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the environmental statement.	References

## 1.8 Next steps

- 1.8.1 The ES forms part of the application for development consent, submitted in October 2018 to The Inspectorate in accordance with the PA 2008. The Inspectorate will consider, on behalf of the Secretary of State, whether the application should be accepted for examination. The Inspectorate has a period of up to 28 days to consider acceptance of the application.
- 1.8.2 If the application is accepted, the pre-examination period will commence. The documents accompanying the DCO application, including this ES, will be publicly available on The Inspectorate's website. The general public (including consultees) will then be able to make relevant representations about the Scheme and its potential impacts. If they do so, they will become "interested

parties" in respect of the Scheme. This stage of the process usually lasts for approximately three months.

- 1.8.3 The Inspectorate then has up to six months to carry out the examination. Interested parties are invited to provide further details of their views in writing. The Inspectorate will consider all relevant and important matters, to include the representations of all interested parties, during this stage.
- 1.8.4 The Inspectorate will then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State in respect of the application within three months of the close of the examination. Subsequently, the Secretary of State has a further three months to decide whether to grant development consent for the Scheme.
- 1.8.5 If the DCO is granted, preliminary works are planned to start in early 2020, with the main construction works planned to start in 2021 and the Scheme due to open to traffic in 2026.

## References

- Ref 1.1: Planning Act (2008)
- Ref 1.2: Environmental Impact Assessment (2017) Regulations
- Ref 1.3: Application Form
- Ref 1.4: Explanatory Memorandum to the Draft Development Consent Order
- Ref 1.5: National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN)
- Ref 1.6: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2018)
- Ref 1.7: Wiltshire Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted January 2015)
- Ref 1.8: Saved policies of the Salisbury District Local Plan 2011 (adopted 2003)
- Ref 1.9: Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2006-2026 (adopted 2009)
- Ref 1.10: Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2006-2026 (adopted 2009)
- Ref 1.11: A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Consultation Report (September 2018)
- Ref 1.12: A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Preferred Route Announcement Brochure

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