

Highways England

Via email

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**A303 Stonehenge Amesbury to Berwick Down Public Consultation
February 2018**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Cycling UK (formerly known as CTC) is the national cycling charity that promotes all forms of cycling, protects the interests of existing and would-be cyclists, and inspires people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to discover the joys of cycling. The undersigned is a registered campaigner of Cycling UK and a frequent cyclist in the area covered by the scheme.

The following comments relate to solely to the impact on cycling of the proposed scheme.

General comments

The proposals put forward by Highways England have the potential to alleviate some of the severance currently experienced by cyclists in this area.

It is important that the final design accords with the Cycling Strategy and Accessibility Strategy produced by Highways England itself. The principles contained in these excellent documents must be reflected in the scheme, e.g.

- Enable users of all abilities to cycle, encouraging cycling as a sustainable form of transport.
- Enable journeys which are safe, secure, comfortable and attractive
- Provide facilities that support the development of integrated, high-quality cycle routes

We should like to stress the importance of a sealed or bound surface for the majority of the routes accessible to cyclists (these are identified in the comments below) so that they can be used by cyclists day and night and throughout the year. The importance of this issue cannot be stressed enough.

In addition the rights of way created under the scheme should be definitive rights of way rather than permissive routes. The experience from the stopping

up of the A344 to Airman's Corner highlights the importance of definitive rather than permissive rights of way (see below).

Finally, it is important that there is consultation with cycling representatives at an early stage in the detailed design process to ensure the maximum benefit possible for cyclists and pedestrians.

Eastern Section – Countess junction to road to Cholderton

Cholderton Junction with A303

Cyclists are currently able to use the minor road from Cholderton (known as Amesbury Road and location of Stonehenge Youth Hostel) to access the A303. This is feasible for experienced cyclists in a westerly direction who can use the A303 west bound and leave at Solstice Park exit. This is not ideal and it is not suitable for families. This has created de facto severance for many cyclists. In the easterly direction there is actual severance because it is not feasible to use the A303 in an uphill easterly direction and cross to enter the road to Cholderton. The scheme will in any case prevent this manoeuvre. We recommend that the scheme boundary is extended to include this junction and a solution implemented for cyclists in conjunction with the existing proposals for the Allington road (see below)

Allington Junction with A303

Cyclists currently use the road from Allington in a westerly direction, accessing the A303 for a short section before exiting at the Solstice Park junction. Because of the absence of a safe crossing of the A303 this is inaccessible in the easterly direction

In order to remedy the severance caused by the A303 to cyclists coming to and from Cholderton and Allington, we recommend the following addition to the scheme.

1. Construction alongside the A303 of an off-carriageway, bi-directional, sealed surface cycleway/footway from the junction of the road from Cholderton (known as Amesbury Road) to the junction with the Allington road.
2. Cyclists then use the section of the road from Allington to be stopped up. This is referred in the consultation document as the Allington Track but it is in fact a tarmac road. Cyclists will need to use this section to reach the new link and so when it is stopped up for motor vehicles, bridleway rights should be retained as should the tarmac surface.
3. Cyclists can then use the new link between the Allington road and Solstice Park. In the consultation document, this is referred to as "a new link created along the private lane between the Allington track and Amesbury Road". However, to our knowledge, the Amesbury Road is a track with an

unsealed surface whereas the Allington track is a tarmac road. It is important, therefore, that this link has a tarmac surface in its entirety

4. From Solstice Park, cyclists can use existing routes into Amesbury.

This solution will provide cyclists with a route from Amesbury to the minor road network to the east of Amesbury and vice versa and eliminate the current severance resulting from the A303. Provided the above routes are provided from the Cholderton and Allington roads, we would not object to the stopping up of the Allington road or the byways to the south of the A303.

Ratfyn

The existing bridleway bridge provides a useful crossing of the A 303 for cyclists to and from the north of Amesbury. The access to the bridleway bridge from Amesbury town centre side (south) is poor and we recommend that this is improved as part of the scheme in order to provide an additional benefit to local people. We also suggest that improvements are made on the north side of this bridleway bridge at Ratfyn.

In addition, we would like to see a direct route to Bulford for walkers and cyclists that does not involve negotiating the roundabout at the junction of the minor road to Bulford. There is a good quality footpath that goes direct to Bulford and upgrading this to bridleway status would provide an additional route for cyclists and equestrians.

Countess Junction

We support the provision of a flyover for the A303 over the A345. We would have no objection to the closure of the subway provided that light-controlled traffic lights are provided for cyclists and pedestrians between Countess Road North and South. We have no comments on the options proposed for the flyover.

Central Section

Stonehenge Road

We support the stopping up of Stonehenge Road for motor vehicles (except private access) and the creation of a definitive byway along this section. As the surface of this road must be suitable for the private access, the surface of this route should remain tarmac and the width must be adequate to allow cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles to pass safely.

Former A303

We support the creation of a definitive byway along the redundant stretch of the existing A303 from Stonehenge Road to just to the east of the existing Longbarrow roundabout. The width of this byway should be a minimum of 4m to

allow for the expected increase in non-motorised traffic and the likely vegetation encroachment.

The surface of this byway should be sealed or bound. There are now good quality surfaces, e.g. Flexipave (see <http://www.kbiuk.co.uk/> that are durable, would fit well into the World Heritage Site and are good for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. However, if there is to be any motor vehicle use along this section by farm, utility or emergency vehicles, then it would be preferable to use a green tarmac as this would also be compatible for use in the WHS. What is absolutely crucial is that cyclists are provided with a route that is useable 24/7 and throughout the year and will not quickly deteriorate.

Junction between the A303 and the former A344 to Airman's Corner

When the A344 was stopped up past Stonehenge itself, non-motorised users were only provided with a permissive bridleway with a non-bound surface. Access to this route was denied for 5 years after the closure and use is currently discouraged by those managing the WHS site on the grounds that its inadequate surface is unable to cope with even low levels of use without sustained damage. In addition, as it is only a permissive route it does not appear on any OS maps.

This deprived cyclists of a direct route from Amesbury to Shrewton. We recommend that this severance is remedied as it resulted from the previous scheme promoted by Highways Agency. We suggest that Byway 12 is improved and given a bound surface from the new byway on the former A303 to join the former A344 near Airman's Corner.

The experience from the A344 scheme clearly demonstrates the need for bound or sealed routes for cyclists and the severance that results if they are not provided. It also shows why definitive routes are required rather than permissive.

Longbarrow junction

We support the diversion of the existing Longbarrow junction to a point 600 m west of the current Longbarrow roundabout.

We support the provision of a green bridge for non-motorised use subject to it being provided with a bound surface and is of an adequate width for use by non-motorised and any authorised motorised use.

We support the provision of definitive byways to the north and south of the Green Bridge No. 4. The byways should have a bound surface and be 4m in width to allow for increased use over time and to cater for vegetation encroachment. In the northerly direction, the byway should continue as far as the junction at Airman's Corner and cyclists provided with a safe crossing to access the A360 to Shrewton and vice versa.

South from the Green Bridge No. 4, the byway continues until it meets the junction with the slip road to the new Longbarrow junction. Cyclists must be provided with safe access to the A360 at this point.

Western Section

We support the bypassing of Winterbourne Stoke and provision of a byway east of the village to link in with the routes through the WHS. However, we are not clear what facilities are provided for cyclists to cross the new Longbarrow junction and would welcome some reassurance from Highways England that a safe crossing will be provided. Cyclists should have a route from Winterbourne Stoke through the new Longbarrow junction and onwards to the new Green Bridge No. 4 (and vice versa) that is safe and direct and has a bound surface. This will allow commuting cyclists to travel by bike from Winterbourne Stoke and Amesbury day and night and throughout the year.

Conclusion

As already indicated the scheme has the potential to reduce the existing community severance caused by the A303 and allow cyclists to once again enjoy cycling in this area.

The devil is often in the detail and so we request that there is early engagement with cycling representatives at an early stage in the detailed design process.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Coles
Winchester CTC on behalf of Cycling UK