

RESPONSE FROM COGS TO HIGHWAYS ENGLAND CONSULTATION ON A303
STONEHENGE TO BERWICK DOWN

Thank you for giving COGS the opportunity to comment on the proposals for the A303 Stonehenge to Berwick Down. COGS is a voluntary body representing more than 140 cyclists in and around Salisbury. We aim to improve facilities for cycling by working with Wiltshire Council and Sustrans, and are affiliated to Cycling UK.

For this response, we have consulted our colleagues from Hampshire Cycling and Cycling UK who were extensively involved in previous consultations for an A303 tunnel scheme, and the Stonehenge Visitors' Centre planning application. In view of these previous consultation and planning exercises, we are very disappointed that so little consideration is given in the exhibition and documents to non-motorised users (NMUs) and sustainable transport modes. We trust that this consultation will result in the design and implementation of world-class facilities for NMUs, bearing in mind that we are still waiting for the implementation of planning obligations agreed under the Visitors' Centre application.

Although there is little for us to comment on at present, this response outlines our concerns and highlights where facilities for NMUs should be designed into the scheme to extend benefits to many users and local residents.

The Highways England Cycling Strategy (2016) states (p1) that "our planned road improvements programme will provide integrated schemes which improve cycling facilities" and "cycling facilities which are safe, separate from traffic and that enable users of all abilities to cycle, encouraging cycling as a sustainable means of transport". The opportunity offered by improvements to the A303 must be taken and include cycling in the design from the outset. The Strategy further states that Partnership Working is a key guiding principle. We at COGS will be happy to assist in fulfilling the delivery of the cycling vision as a partner and stakeholder to "identify and support the delivery of cycling facilities" and look forward to working closely with you as the design process develops.

Transport Focus has recently summarised the priorities for Highways England's network for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians (January 2017). The interests of these three groups of vulnerable road users largely coincide in that they need safe, direct and convenient routes along and across major roads. They agree that "they want provision incorporated for them at the outset of scheme design, rather than fighting for adaptations later". The network "can be a barrier to making journeys, severing links between communities, places of work and routes such as the National Cycle Network (NCN)".

Our main concerns

- **Access and surface between Stonehenge Road and Longbarrow roundabout.**
The A303 provides an all-weather link for east-west journeys by bike, although there is no cycle-friendly infrastructure. There is no pavement or other pedestrian facility between Stonehenge Road and Winterbourne Stoke, thus pedestrians, and equestrians, are excluded from a direct route to Stonehenge from both directions.. When the tunnel is constructed, its use will be prohibited for all 3 groups, increasing severance between communities and places of work, for example, unless the facilities designed to replace the existing road allow use by all NMUs in all conditions. For cyclists, surface quality is important to give a safe comfortable ride to people on a wide range of different types of bike. There is no alternative at present except the A303 and **a bound surface to replace it is essential.**
- **Where the realigned A303 crosses essential cycling routes** At present the A303 causes considerable severance to cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians travelling across it on quiet local roads or off-road on bridleways and byways. These key routes are summarised on the accompanying map. The tunnel will mitigate effects on some of them but road junctions and realigned roads must assist NMUs where these routes are affected.
- **Where cyclists need to leave/rejoin the local road network at Longbarrow, Stonehenge Road and Countess roundabout** Both roundabouts are very poorly designed for cyclists. Although the underpass at Countess provides a safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists it is sub standard in height and width, and needs to be considered when redesigning the roundabout. Longbarrow roundabout is not all cycle-friendly at present. Although this will be mitigated by the tunnel, NMUs will need to cross the A360 to access the existing A303 through Winterbourne Stoke. The precise position of the eastern portal is yet to be determined, but Stonehenge Road must remain as a tarmac surface and the junction with the Woodford Valley road be preserved.

Design Issues that need to be addressed

- **Surfaces** Preserve and maintain tarmac surfaces through Amesbury to Stonehenge Road and through Winterbourne Stoke, provide a bound surface across the WHS designed sensitively between the end of Stonehenge Road and Longbarrow roundabout
- **Cycle-proof all junctions and crossings** where vulnerable road users need to use local roads and rights of way
- **Ensure that severance is not increased** for local residents and non-motorised through travellers between Amesbury, Winterbourne Stoke and Shrewton

- **Improve links** to NCN45 via Amesbury and the Woodford Valley and to NCN24 via the Woodford Valley to Salisbury and Till Valley to Stapleford, improve byway 11 and 12 surfaces and ensure their continuity with new infrastructure to provide a comprehensive network of routes for NMUs
- **Signage** Provide signage to a high standard to aid NMUs to negotiate the network and encourage sustainable travel for local residents and visitors

Benefits

Although we are responding on behalf of cyclists, including the facilities outlined above in the A303 scheme will have much wider benefits. At present, sustainable travel is not encouraged. There is no direct connection between Amesbury and Shrewton via Stonehenge that is suitable in all weathers for NMUs (including vehicles for disabled users, people with prams, bikes that are unsuitable for off-road use). Likewise, most of these groups are excluded from direct travel between Amesbury and Winterbourne Stoke by the necessity to use the A303. The scheme must address these issues to benefit others than motorised users of the A303 wishing to travel east-west as quickly as possible.

Dr Gill Anlezark

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