

A submission in relation to:

Planning Act 2008 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

**Application by Highways England ("the Applicant") for an Order granting Development Consent for the construction of a new two-lane dual carriageway for the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down in Wiltshire.
REQUEST FOR FINAL COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S CONSULTATION LETTER OF 16 JULY 2020**

Since the original proposals for the construction of new road on the A303 significant and unforeseen changes have occurred which must finally lead to the abandonment of this completely unacceptable scheme.

The changes are touched on in the *Additional Submission Environmental statement – Addendum addressing 'new discovery' responding to Secretary of State letter dated 16 July 2020*.

However, the assessment of the significance of the Durrington Walls discovery (Section 5 in the above document) is tokenistic and does not address key issues.

The reality is that the recent publication of the discoveries of a pit structure associated with Durrington Walls (Gaffney et al 2020) must be seen in the context of all the other social, economic and archaeological issues which have been exposed through recent events in the Climate Emergency and the Covid Pandemic. These are alluded to but not dealt with in the *Additional Submission*.

1. The discoveries at Durrington provide a graphic illustration of the problems inherent in any proposals making assumptions about or ignoring the potential wealth of archaeology which may exist in all landscapes but most specifically and particularly, in this case, in a landscape such as that covered by the recent findings of the Stonehenge Hidden Landscapes Project.

The plan to drive a dual carriageway across this landscape is totally unacceptable since it takes no account of the landscape and features, both manmade and natural, which contain Stonehenge, recognised globally, as one of the most significant ancient monuments in existence.

As argued by Unesco as long ago as 2007, Stonehenge is 'part of a larger ritual

centre' (Huge Settlement Unearthed Near Stonehenge World Heritage Site: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/310>). The publication of the full results in 2020 has reinforced the interconnectedness and fragility of the ancient structures that remain, often hidden from view. We should not be risking damage to these precious elements of our international history of the development of humans. For they are international and we have a debt and a responsibility to the whole world, as recognised by the UNESCO World Heritage Sites operations.

2. Additionally, conditions change. The Climate Crisis is accelerating throughout the world. There is agreement amongst scientists. Governments and environmental organisations are increasingly having to address the need to restructure transport and to cut back on the use of private cars, given that these latter are now acknowledged to be contributing vastly to air pollution. The DfT's *Setting the Challenge* talks about making public transport and active transport (such as cycling and walking) 'the natural first choice for our daily activities' which is clearly at odds with the development of the new A303 road. Ultimately decarbonisation will not resolve the problems and we will need to rethink how we manage and set priorities for transport. This must not include schemes which create further traffic. The government's own *Roads and the environment* can have no validity if, in practice, anti-environmental road schemes are promoted.
3. The changes to the life of the whole country brought about by the Coronavirus Pandemic are clearly not going to be temporary or short term. People are being asked, where they still have jobs, to radically alter their working practices, with those who can work from home doing so, Commuting whether between cities and major conurbations, or within cities is over. Major corporations recognise the need to change and are already moving towards working practices which will make city centre offices redundant. Major roads carrying commuter traffic will be going to be surplus to requirements as people work and live local.

The concomitant of this is the regeneration and extension of public transport which will enable tourists and one-off journey travellers between different places to enjoy readily accessible and affordable journeys.

This submission makes no attempt to cover in detail every aspect of the unacceptable nature of the current proposals. It is hoped that those who finally make the decision will bear in mind that the latest discoveries and developing understanding of Durrington Walls as an integral part of a precious and irreplaceable landscape which stands alongside Stonehenge, not as a separate environment but as an integral part of the landscape which they and, possibly other as yet, undiscovered

structures and 'anomalies' share as evidence of how our society has been shaped and how women and men lived. A dual carriageway which already looks outmoded in this threatened environment we live in, certainly has no part to play in the advancement of understanding of our ancestors.

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