

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [A303 Stonehenge](#)  
**Subject:** HotSW LEP Response to A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down (Stonehenge) Development Consent Order  
**Date:** 30 March 2022 10:11:56  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[A303 Stonehenge re-examination HotSW 220330.pdf](#)  
[A303 Phase 2 upgrade - Heart of the South West LEP.pdf](#)

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Please find attached a letter from the HotSW LEP together with the copy letter confirming the decision made last year that dualling the Ilminster Bypass would be the next scheme on the A303.

Kind regards

Janet

**Janet Powell**  
Executive Assistant

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



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By email to [A303Stonehenge@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:A303Stonehenge@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

30 March 2022

Dear Sirs,

### **A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down (Stonehenge) Development Consent Order**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond following the response by National Highways to the Secretary of State's invitation to make a further submission prior to re-determination.

The Heart of the South-West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is strongly supportive of the principle of improving the A303 and A358 to dual carriageway standard throughout the complete length between the M3 motorway and the M5 at Taunton. The LEP is of the view that the creation of a second strategic route to the South-West from London and the South-East is of great importance to the economic prosperity of the South-West, which currently lags behind the UK average.

Productivity of labour in the Heart of the South-West, in terms of Gross Value Added per hour, places the LEP in the bottom third of LEP areas. This reflects both the relative rurality of the South-West but also its peripherality. Improved strategic connectivity is therefore a key requisite of improving economic performance in the South-West peninsula.

We therefore wish to re-state our full support for the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down improvement.

We also have some comments relating to the traffic and economic forecasts. At the public examination in 2019 we argued that the assessment of economic benefits presented by the applicant was likely to be an under-estimate, as the future year traffic forecasts did not reflect the eventual completion of dualling the A303 to dual carriageway standards. This was recognised in the examining authority's report (para 5.17.90) and conclusions (para 7.2.12).

We note that in the applicant's revision of the transport assessment the traffic forecasts have been updated to reflect amended scheme opening dates. However,

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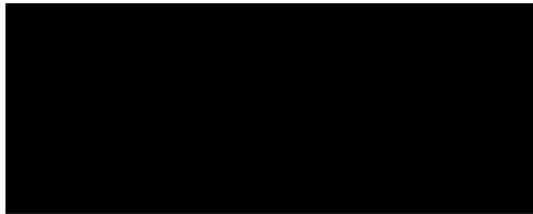
there is no mention of any change in the network assumptions, implying that the uncertainty log remains the same as that used in 2018.

We would note that since the DCO application was prepared in 2018 there has been further progress in bringing forward the strategy for upgrading the whole A303/A358 corridor. Construction of the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester dualling is now under way; a preferred route has been announced for the A358 Taunton to Southfields dualling with the DCO submission planned for later in 2022; and A303 South Petherton to Southfields has been selected by the Secretary of State as a RIS2 pipeline project. A copy of the letter confirming this decision is attached to this response.

Hence, it remains our view that the economic case presented for the Amesbury to Berwick Down scheme may underestimate the benefits of the project, both in terms of the quantifiable transport benefits and the wider economic impact.

We confirm our wholehearted support for the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down improvement, both for the economic benefits which it will deliver and also the heritage benefits of removing road traffic from its current close proximity to Stonehenge.

Yours sincerely,



David Ralph  
Chief Executive



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David Stones  
Network Planning Division Director,  
Strategy and Planning  
National Highways  
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GU1 4LZ

21 December 2021

Dear Mr Ralph

### **RIS3 Pipeline: A303 Phase 2 upgrade**

In March 2020 the Government published its second [Road Investment Strategy \(RIS2\)](#), which covers investment in and management of the strategic road network (SRN) from April 2020 to March 2025.

In RIS2 the Government reaffirmed its commitment to a high-quality connection to the south-west, including the delivery of the A303 Stonehenge (Amesbury to Berwick Down), A303 Sparkford to Ilchester and A358 Taunton to Southfields schemes. I am pleased to say that construction on the Sparkford to Ilchester scheme is already underway.

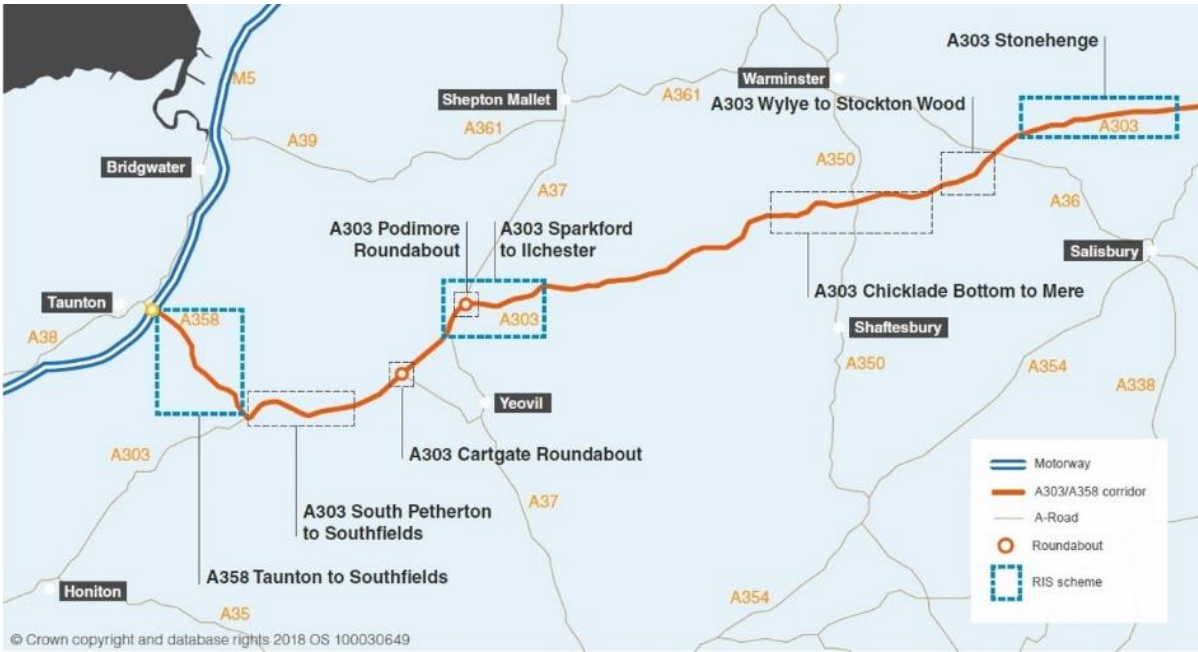
RIS2 also identified a pipeline of 32 schemes for initial development during the second Road Period (2020-2025) so that they could be considered for construction in a future RIS. One of the RIS3 Pipeline schemes named in RIS2 is the 'A303 Phase 2 upgrade'. RIS3 Pipeline schemes are not committed for delivery, but initial development of the schemes in the current Road Period will help to inform the Government's investment decisions for RIS3 (2025-2030) and beyond.

Thank you for your letter in June of this year outlining the Heart of the South West LEP's views on the prioritisation of the remaining improvement schemes on the A303/A358 corridor. Your thoughts were included in the information we put to the Department for Transport (DfT) in early Autumn.

I am writing to let you know that the scope of the A303 Phase 2 upgrade scheme identified for initial development as part of the RIS3 Pipeline will be South Petherton to Southfields.

Figure 1 below shows the location of South Petherton to Southfields relative to the currently committed schemes on the A303/A358 corridor and the remaining potential future improvements along the route.

The South Petherton to Southfields scheme presents opportunities to address safety concerns along this section of the route, enhance the resilience of the SRN to the south-west and is complimentary to the adjacent A358 Taunton to Southfields project.



**Figure 1. Scheme location on the A303/A358 corridor**

Whilst this will be good news for many of our customers and stakeholders, I recognise that for others the section between Wyllye and Mere may have been the preference for this initial development activity.

Upgrading the A303/A358 corridor is a significant undertaking, requiring the adoption of a sequential approach which minimises impacts on users of the route and is proportionate to funding available at a national level. Preparation for subsequent corridor improvements will need to await future Road Periods.

Initial development of the South Petherton to Southfields scheme is expected to start in Spring 2022 and will follow the same approach as the other schemes in the RIS3 Pipeline, all of which remain uncommitted at this time.

Ministers are expected to take a view on the progress of the RIS3 Pipeline schemes following completion of the initial development work. For South Petherton to Southfields this is anticipated to be in 2023-2024.

A decision to progress the South Petherton to Southfields scheme to construction in a future RIS period will be considered through the RIS3 development process. In addition to considering the viability of the scheme in value for money terms, its alignment to emerging 'themes' for RIS3 will be assessed (such as levelling up and decarbonisation), as well as its contribution to RIS3 strategic outcomes set out in the DfT's RIS3 approach document, [Planning Ahead](#).

Could I also take this opportunity to remind you that the engagement period for interested parties to help inform our emerging route strategies, which will assess the current performance and future pressures and opportunities on the SRN, has been extended until the end of December. More information on route strategies can be found in our approach document [Vision for route strategies: Planning for the future of our roads](#).

This allows all interested parties to provide feedback on how our strategic roads should be developed. If you wish to submit further information or evidence you can email us at [routestrategies@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:routestrategies@highwaysengland.co.uk) before the end of December, whilst the [online feedback tool](#) will also remain open until this date.

The evidence identified through the route strategies process will be vital for the development of RIS3 and beyond, allowing informed decisions to be made on recommendations for potential future scheme options across the whole of our network.

Any queries relating to the A303 Phase 2 upgrade scheme should be directed to Wayne George, National Highways Head of Scheme Planning and Sponsorship at

Yours sincerely

David Stones  
Network Planning Division Director, Strategy and Planning