



4 April 2022

Dear sirs

A303 Stonehenge Road Widening Scheme

I am writing to ask the Secretary of State to order a full re-examination of the context and circumstances in which the proposed scheme would operate and the impacts which it would have, and to ask for cross departmental advice on the way forward, before he redetermines the application for a Development Consent Order.

It appears that in response to the Secretary of State's request to National Highways for comments on various matters which he wishes to consider before making a further determination, National Highways has produced a narrow and technical reiteration of the conclusions it had reached on this particular scheme and the process by which it had done so.

It may well be that this is a completely proper way for National Highways to reply and that they are correct in avoiding offering the Secretary of State views on matters which go beyond their remit. However it does not appear on its own to provide an adequate basis for consideration of the wider issues which the Secretary of State should wish to consider in reaching his conclusion.

In particular, National Highways has not taken account of the impact on the basis on which the Stonehenge site is considered a World Heritage site by recognising that the Secretary of State has already found that the scheme's impact on the proposed western cutting area would be "significantly adverse" and by proposing changes to take account of this damage. Nor has it explained whether and how recognising the damage which will be done to the site impacts on the assessment of the desirability of for example the southern by-pass route or the provision of a longer tunnel.

Similarly it has not updated the carbon assessment or the cost assessment of the scheme. These cannot be matters of no concern to the Secretary of State, given the changes which have occurred over the last two years as a result of growing concern about Climate Change on which the Government has sought to take a lead internationally and domestically, not least through the Environment Act 2021. Moreover, COVID and the longer term impacts of the war in Ukraine have introduced new considerations across a wide range of matters for which the Government as whole is responsible.

The Secretary of State should have the opportunity to take the widest possible view of the implications of implementing a scheme along the lines of the one still proposed, before being

asked to redetermine the application for a Development Consent Order.

Yours sincerely

Michael Gillespie