

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [A303 Stonehenge](#)  
**Subject:** Comment for the Secretary of State concerning the redetermination of the A303 Stonehenge scheme  
**Date:** 04 April 2022 23:50:57

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I am writing to express my strong support for calls to defer or abandon the National Highways proposal for a short tunnel under the WHS site at Stonehenge.

The key reasons or grounds on which I believe the SoS must find against issuing a DCO are:

### **Impact on the WHS status**

The case for the tunnel is that it removes the road from the WHS. Regrettably, the tunnel is too short to remove the road from the WHS, since it emerges into a long cutting through the western part of the WHS.

National Highways has not recognised the SoS's concerns about the significant adverse impact of the proposed western cutting on the World Heritage Site (WHS), which is significantly larger than just the area around the "Stones"

The status of Stonehenge as having "outstanding universal value" will be seriously compromised if the **integrity** of the wider WHS is lost due to the major incursion of a new road through the western side of this extremely sensitive site.

The road scheme will do irreversible damage to an area, which retains many archeological treasures to be explored and properly documented.

### **Deliverability of a robust VFM scheme**

The NAO report of 2019 argued that the value for money of this road scheme could not be justified on traditional transport grounds, citing benefits of 31 pence produced for every £1 spent. DfT would usually reject such proposals out of hand.

The NAO gave support to the scheme partly on the basis that the introduction of wider heritage benefits from "taking the road out of the WHS site" meant that the BCR could be increased to 1.15:1.

A tunnel will remove the main traffic flow from sight of the Stones. Regrettably, as noted above, the current National Highways scheme does not take the road out of the WHS and therefore undermines the NAO case to support the scheme on VFM grounds.

The NAO also noted that any benefits would only be fully realised if five linked but as yet unfunded road schemes were also delivered.

NAO expressed their concern that without tight cost control and project management that delivery of the tunnel scheme would not justify the expense when many much higher priority schemes also need funding.

Approval of a scheme that puts Stonehenge's WHS status at serious risk must further undermine confidence in a marginal BCR so heavily reliant on retaining the heritage benefits.

The minor time savings on the overall journey between the M3 and the south west suggest

that an investment in excess of £1.6 billion will never secure adequate returns to justify proceeding with a scheme addressing peak congestion on Summer weekends.

### **Recommendation**

The SoS should direct National Highways to undertake a full assessment of:

Alternative routes such as a southern bypass which would be less damaging to the WHS.

Local road management schemes, which could make a big difference to local traffic at significantly less cost.

I trust the SoS will give due weight to the widespread public concern that this is one scheme that deserves much greater independent scrutiny given the damage it will do the WHS.