

A417 Missing Link
TR010056

7.11 Cotswold Way National Trail
Diversion Report (Rev 1)

Planning Act 2008

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)
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Procedure) Regulations 2009

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**The Infrastructure Planning
(Applications: Prescribed Forms
and Procedure) Regulations 2009**

A417 Missing Link

Development Consent Order 202[x]

7.11 Cotswold Way National Trail Diversion Report

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Cotswold Way is a long distance route, known as a National Trail. It runs from Chipping Campton to Bath through the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and crosses the A417 by way of the Air Balloon roundabout near Crickley Hill County Park.
- 1.1.2 Highways England is applying for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to improve the A417 Missing Link, a three-mile stretch of single carriageway between the Brockworth bypass and Cowley roundabout (the scheme).
- 1.1.3 As part of the scheme, Highways England is proposing to divert the existing National Trail over the A417 by way of a new crossing near Emma's Grove. This new crossing would enable users to safely cross the A417, reconnecting the Cotswold Way National Trail such that it more closely follows its historical alignment.
- 1.1.4 The statutory mechanism for the creation and management of a National Trail is set out in sections 50A to 55 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (the 1949 Act)¹.
- 1.1.5 A National Trail can only be varied in accordance with section 55 of the 1949 Act. The relevant part of section 55 is as follows:
- Section 55. — Variation of approved proposals.*
- (1) Where proposals relating to a long-distance route have been approved by the Minister under section fifty-two of this Act, Natural England may from time to time prepare and submit to the Minister a report proposing any such variation of the approved proposals as Natural England may think fit.*
- (2) Where, as respects any proposals approved as aforesaid, it appears to the Minister, after consultation with Natural England, expedient that the proposals should be varied in any respect and [Natural England] have not submitted to the Minister a report proposing that variation, the Minister may direct that the proposals shall be so varied.*
- 1.1.6 This report has been prepared by Highways England in consultation with, and approved by, Natural England and the Cotswold Conservation Board. It makes proposals for the diversion of the Cotswold Way to be approved by the Secretary of State for Transport by way of the DCO for the scheme. Accordingly, Highways England is seeking to disapply section 52(2) of the 1949 Act insofar as it relates to the scheme in accordance with section 120 of the Planning Act 2008.
- 1.1.7 This report explains how we propose to divert the Cotswold Way and sets out:
- a. The context for the diversion and why it is required;
 - b. The proposed new route, with reference to the proposals illustrated at Appendix A (permanent) and B (temporary during construction);
 - c. How we have considered any potential environmental impacts;
 - d. Details of how the proposed diversion would be legally and physically established;
 - e. The long-term maintenance and funding arrangements for the diverted route; and

¹ 1949 c. 97

- f. Any alternative routes and options considered.

2 The proposal

2.1 The existing route

- 2.1.1 Extending from the English market town of Chipping Campden to the Roman city of Bath, the 102-mile (164 km) Cotswold Way is a promoted long-distance walk and celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020. Following the western edge of the Cotswold Hills, the route journeys through rolling pastures, beech woodland, and villages built from Cotswold stone.
- 2.1.2 Users of the route pass through ancient commons in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Neolithic burial barrows, stately homes and historic battle sites. The path along the Cotswold escarpment offers ever-changing views to the west towards the River Severn and the Malvern Hills.
- 2.1.3 The existing Cotswold Way National Trail is well way-marked and promoted, and further information can be found on the National Trail website².
- 2.1.4 In the vicinity of the A417 Missing Link scheme, the route from the south passes via Barrow Wake before joining the current A417 on its approach and at grade crossing of the existing Air Balloon roundabout. The route then traverses north through Crickley Hill Country Park and beyond. It routes along a public road in this location.

2.2 The need for permanent diversion

- 2.2.1 Users of the Cotswold Way National Trail are currently required to cross the Air Balloon roundabout at grade, which typically involves conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles at that busy junction.
- 2.2.2 The A417 Missing Link scheme seeks to address transport related problems in this area, including safety and congestion. The scheme vision is for a landscaped highways improvement scheme that will deliver a safe and resilient free-flowing road whilst conserving and enhancing the special character of the Cotswolds AONB; reconnecting landscape and ecology; bringing about landscape, wildlife and heritage benefits, including enhanced visitors' enjoyment of the area; improving local communities' quality of life; and contributing to the health of the economy and local businesses.
- 2.2.3 In order to deliver this vision, the following scheme objectives have been set:
- **Safe, resilient and efficient network:** to create a high-quality resilient route that helps to resolve traffic problems and achieves reliable journey times between the Thames Valley and West Midlands as well as providing appropriate connections to the local road network.
 - **Improving the natural environment and heritage:** to maximise opportunities for landscape, historic and natural environment enhancement within the Cotswolds AONB and to reduce negative impacts of the proposed scheme on the surrounding environment.
 - **Community & access:** to enhance the quality of life for local residents and visitors by reducing traffic intrusion and pollution, discouraging rat-running

² https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/cotswold-way/

through villages and substantially improving public access for the enjoyment of the countryside.

- Supporting economic growth: to facilitate economic growth, benefit local businesses and improve prosperity by the provision of a free-flowing road giving people more reliable local and strategic journeys.

2.2.4 As a landscape-led scheme seeking to adhere to high environmental standards and respond to the special qualities of the AONB, it is cognisant of those pertinent to the National Trail:

“an accessible landscape for quiet recreation for both rural and urban users, with numerous walking and riding routes, including the Cotswolds Way National Trail”.

2.2.5 Furthermore, the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan³ contains ambitions and policies of relevance to the National Trail, summarised below:

- Ambition 1 – to promote the Cotswolds AONB as the walking and exploring capital of England
- Policy UE2 (Access and Recreation) – creating a safe, pleasant, accessible, clearly waymarked and well connected Public Rights of Way network [that] should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds AONB.

2.2.6 The preferred route for the scheme was announced in March 2019⁴ and it would directly impact on the route of the National Trail where it currently crosses the A417 in the vicinity of the Air Balloon roundabout.

2.2.7 The A417 Missing Link scheme proposes the demolition of the existing Air Balloon roundabout and provision of an Ullenwood roundabout, accessed from Leckhampton Hill in the north and Shab Hill junction in the south. The Cotswold Way National Trail would be directly impacted and require diversion as part of the scheme.

2.3 Description of permanent diversion required

2.3.1 The scheme would provide a grade separated crossing (overbridge) of the A417, known as ‘the Cotswold Way crossing’, which would accommodate the National Trail subject to a short diversion. The existing route would be stopped up for a length of 152m between a point south of the Air Balloon public house and a point south of the Air Balloon cottages. It would then be diverted over the new Cotswold Way crossing for a length of 180m, where it would join its existing route at each end.

2.3.2 A plan showing the proposed permanent diversion is at Appendix A.

2.3.3 The Cotswold Way crossing would be a 5-metre-wide restricted byway route, in the vicinity of Emma’s Grove and connecting to Cold Slad, to provide benefits including a grade separated diversion of the Cotswold Way National Trail.

2.3.4 It would enhance the visitor experience of this important long-distance route, bringing a significant improvement when compared to the existing situation. Users would benefit from avoiding conflict with vehicles when making the crossing of the A417 as part of the diversion, and would benefit from views across the landscape

³ <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Management-Plan-2018-23.pdf>

⁴ <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/our-work/south-west/a417-missing-link/>

compared to the existing situation that involved crossing at grade the Air Balloon roundabout.

- 2.3.5 The structure could also accommodate seasonal cattle crossings from nearby agricultural holdings, as requested by local farmers.
- 2.3.6 At 5 metres wide, the crossing would be wide enough to accommodate different users, and there would be resting places along it to help assist those with mobility needs.
- 2.3.7 In responding to the ambitions and policies referred to in section 2.2 above, the design of the permanent diversion seeks to provide a safe, pleasant, accessible, and clearly waymarked crossing of the A417 to carry the National Trail where it is directly affected by the proposals.
- 2.3.8 Alternative permanent diversions have been carefully considered, as set out in section 6 of this report.

2.4 The need for temporary diversion

- 2.4.1 During construction, in the period up to around July 2025 the existing at grade route of the National Trail alongside the existing A417 and its crossing at the existing Air Balloon Roundabout will continue to be available, without conflicting with construction activities.
- 2.4.2 Around July 2025, traffic will then be switched from the existing A417 between the existing Air Balloon Roundabout and Cowley junction onto the proposed new section of A417. At that point the existing A417 will then become part of a construction site. The existing A417 will be utilised to prefabricate the main span of the Cotswold Way crossing, before lifting into place with a 1,000-tonne crane.
- 2.4.3 The northern ramp for the new bridge that will provide the Cotswold Way crossing cannot be completed until after traffic has been switched from the existing A417 up Crickley Hill, which will be around October 2025. Subsequent to that switch, approximately six months is further required to allow for the construction of the northern ramp of the bridge together with completing finishes.
- 2.4.4 Then around April 2026, there would still be construction traffic using the existing A417 Crickley Hill, so a temporary routing and controlled crossing may be required to ensure the safety of walkers and separate them from construction activities. Full completion of the works would be around July 2026.
- 2.4.5 From around July 2025 for a period of around 10 months it would therefore be unsafe for pedestrians to access the area, and the National Trail's crossing at the existing Air Balloon Roundabout will no longer continue to be available due to the conflict with construction activities and heavy construction plant machinery.
- 2.4.6 During construction there would therefore be a required temporary diversion of the National Trail (and the underlying public rights of way) for a period of around ten months from around July 2025. The temporary diversion would ensure continued access for users of the National Trail whilst works take place to construct the permanent Cotswold Way crossing overbridge and associated development, which would provide the permanent diversion during the scheme's operation.

2.5 Description of temporary diversion required during construction

- 2.5.1 The scheme includes a grade separated crossing (overbridge) of the A417, known as 'the Gloucestershire Way crossing', to be situated north of the proposed Shab Hill junction, south of Ullen Wood. It will be provided as part of the scheme to permanently divert the Gloucestershire Way long distance path, integrate the landscape and improve ecological connectivity.
- 2.5.2 The Gloucestershire Way crossing will be developed as part of the early re-provision of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) as set out in the Public Rights of Way Management Plan (Annex F of the Environmental Management Plan, Document Reference 6.4). It will therefore be available to accommodate users of the National Trail as part of a temporary diversion during construction for a period of around 10 months from around July 2025.
- 2.5.3 This would involve a diversion of the National Trail via a new section of footpath to connect Cold Slad lane to Cowley footpath 3 (part of the Gloucestershire Way) via Coberley footpath 15, and a new section of footpath to connect Coberley footpath 15 to the Gloucestershire Way crossing. The Gloucestershire Way crossing itself would include a 3.5m bridleway to accommodate pedestrians. That would then join the new short section of diverted Coberley footpath 16 (part of the Gloucestershire Way), connecting to the existing Cowley footpath 1 (part of the Gloucestershire Way), before joining the existing route of the National Trail along the existing A417 north of Barrow Wake car park.
- 2.5.4 A plan showing the proposed temporary diversion during construction is at Appendix B.
- 2.5.5 The diversion would involve an increased journey length of around 1620m, which although is considered to be a long diversion, is unavoidable, and would be minimised to a duration of around 10 months only. The users of the diversion would also enjoy a safe route, and a route that would utilise the views of the landscape from the Gloucestershire Way crossing, as well as navigate past the Emma's Grove Neolithic burial barrows.
- 2.5.6 Alternative temporary diversions have been carefully considered, as set out in section 7 of this report.

3 Environmental Assessment

- 3.1.1 Chapter 12 Population and Human Health of the Environmental Statement submitted with the DCO application (Document Reference 6.2, APP-043) considers and assesses likely impacts of the proposals on walking, cycling and horse riding alongside public rights of way.
- 3.1.2 Environmental Statement Appendix 12.2 provides the Walking, Cycling & Horse riding including Disabled Users Review at Preliminary Design (Document Reference 6.4, APP-396). That document sets out that the Cotswold Way crossing would have a width of at least 5m between parapets to provide a safe route for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriages along the restricted byway. It would benefit from parapets 1.8m high with 1.0m solid infill to safely accommodate the users of the crossing. It would have maximum gradients of 5% with rest areas at appropriate intervals, as an accessible route.
- 3.1.3 The environmental assessment concludes there would be a permanent moderate beneficial effect with the provision of the Cotswold Way crossing, recognising its safety and accessibility benefits compared to the existing situation. It sets out how the user experience would be improved significantly with the permanent diversion of the National Trail over the Cotswold Way crossing, given people would avoid conflicts with traffic.
- 3.1.4 During construction, temporary effects are likely given the linear nature of the scheme and the construction activities required. For example, noise, dust and temporary diversions could all have an impact on users of the existing routes including the National Trail. However, through the Public Rights of Way Management Plan (Environmental Statement Appendix 2.1 Environmental Management Plan Annex F (Document Reference 6.4, APP-323)), it is intended to keep the majority of PRow open via local management, early re-provision and/or use of short-term, temporary closures (such as that proposed for the National Trail) in order to balance the risks to the public against the potential disruption that removing such a risk would cause.
- 3.1.5 As will be secured through the Environmental Management Plan Annex F (Document Reference 6.4, APP-323), during construction Highways England or its contractor would also provide a Public Liaison Officer and/or operate a Community Relations team with contact details to be provided on relevant signage located along the Public Rights of Way network (for example, giving notice of temporary closures/diversions). Concerns can be flagged through this procedure and any concerns raised would be shared with Gloucestershire County Council Public Rights of Way Officers for discussion when appropriate.
- 3.1.6 Best practice construction methods would also seek to reduce if not avoid indirect temporary effects on users of the National Trail and connecting routes, for example with dust suppression methods of construction.
- 3.1.7 Highways England propose to implement early re-provision of Public Rights of Way as part of the early construction phase of the scheme to help limit periods where access is affected to a minimum. It is therefore anticipated that with the implementation of management and appropriate mitigation as identified in the PRow Management Plan (ES Appendix 2.1 Environmental Management Plan Annex F (Document Reference 6.4, APP-323)) there would be slight adverse effects on pedestrians using the National Trail and connecting routes during the construction of the scheme, which would not be significant.

4 Consultation

- 4.1.1 Following consultation, design and assessment work undertaken up to 2018, a Preferred Route Announcement was made in March 2019, confirming the scheme's route selected to be taken forward in a DCO application. Further information on this process is provided in the Scheme Assessment Report (Document Reference 7.4, APP-420) and ES Chapter 3 Assessment of Alternatives (Document Reference 6.2, APP-034).
- 4.1.2 Then between 27 October 2019 and 8 November 2019, Highways England carried out a statutory public consultation on the proposals and sought feedback on the scheme design that was developed along the preferred route alignment. A summary of how Highways England carried out the 2019 statutory consultation and had regard to the responses received is provided in Chapters 5 to 7 of the Consultation Report (Document Reference 5.1, APP-027).
- 4.1.3 Taking into account the consultation feedback received alongside latest and emerging environmental survey results, Highways England made the decision in July 2020 to review and make changes to its design. As set out in Chapter 7 of the Consultation Report, the changes included the removal of the previously proposed green bridge on Crickley Hill, and a change to the proposed gradient of the road on the Crickley Hill escarpment. This involved proposals for the permanent diversion of the National Trail.
- 4.1.4 Following the changes to the scheme announced in July 2020, Highways England carried out a supplementary statutory consultation between 13 October 2020 and 12 November 2020 to seek feedback on the design changes within the revised scheme. This involved revised proposals for the permanent diversion of the National Trail. A summary of how Highways England carried out the 2020 statutory consultation and had regard to the responses received is provided in Chapters 8 -10 of the Consultation Report (Document Reference 5.1, APP-027).
- 4.1.5 Having analysed the feedback from the supplementary statutory consultation, the scheme has been subject to further minor design changes in response. An additional targeted consultation with landowners was carried out between 8 February and 9 March 2021 in relation to these minor changes to the scheme design, to consider the pertinent red line boundary and land ownership information. Details of how Highways England carried out this targeted statutory consultation and had regard to the responses received is provided in Chapter 11 of the Consultation Report (Document Reference 5.1, APP-027).
- 4.1.6 The need and approach to the diversion has been consulted upon and discussed with Natural England (who are responsible for and fund the maintenance of the National Trail), Cotswold Conservation Board (CCB) (who help maintain the National Trail on behalf of Natural England) and other interested parties.
- 4.1.7 Alongside statutory consultation, non-statutory or engagement activities have been undertaken with key stakeholders to help discuss, agree and inform design matters. For example, a Walking, Cycling and Horse riding Technical Working Group (WCH TWG) has helped to shape proposals for rights of way. Natural England and CCB have been involved in all stages of statutory and non-statutory consultation and are members of the WCH TWG. Overall, they have expressed support for the diversion of the National Trail because of the enhancement the Cotswold Way crossing would provide to its users. A summary of relevant consultation activities is provided at Appendix C.

- 4.1.8 In addition to pre-application consultation, once a DCO application has been accepted for examination by the Planning Inspectorate there is a period in which comments on an application, including this proposal, can be submitted to the Inspectorate for consideration by the Examining Authority. As a result of making a representation at this time any person will be kept informed of progress and opportunities to get involved in the examination of the application. Details will also be published on the Planning Inspectorate website. For further information see Advice Note 8.2: How to register to take part in an Examination⁵.

⁵ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>

5 Establishment and Maintenance

- 5.1.1 Section 120 of the Planning Act 2008 sets out what may be included within a DCO and provides the legal basis for both the disapplication of section 55 of the 1949 Act and a separate provision to give effect to the diversion of the National Trail.
- 5.1.2 Article 20 of the draft DCO provides that the National Trail diversion will take effect on the date on which the permanent diversion is laid out and provided in accordance with this Report.
- 5.1.3 Once the diversion has taken effect, Highways England will provide Natural England with mapping details of the new route in a format compatible with Natural England's Geographic Information Systems, in order to enable the updating of Natural England's records and public information displays.
- 5.1.4 As set out in section 2 of this report, the National Trail in this area predominantly routes along public roads. As part of the scheme the existing National Trail route would be stopped up for a length of 152m between a point south of the Air Balloon public house and a point south of the Air Balloon cottages (refer to A13 on sheet 2 of the Rights of Way and access plans). This section of the existing National trail is coincident with a section of the existing A417 that is to be stopped up as part of the scheme. It would then be diverted over the new Cotswold Way crossing for a length of 180m (refer to PR9 on sheet 2 of the Rights of Way and access plans), where it would join its existing route at each end. This is clearly set out in the PRoW Management Plan (ES Appendix 2.1 Environmental Management Plan Annex F (Document Reference 6.4, APP-323)).
- 5.1.5 The Cotswold Way crossing would carry a new restricted byway classification, and therefore the National Trail as diverted pursuant to this report would benefit from that underlying Public Right of Way allowing walkers, cyclists and horse riders to use it for that section.
- 5.1.6 The Rights of Way and Access Plans (Document Reference 2.5 (Rev 4)) and associated Schedules 3 and 4 in the draft DCO (Document Reference 3.1 (Rev 4)) set out in detail the proposals for both stopping up and creation of PRoW.
- 5.1.7 The proposed infrastructure to carry the diverted National Trail is likely to only require limited maintenance over its design life. Therefore, the focus of maintenance requirements is likely to be limited to vegetation trimming and minor repairs only.
- 5.1.8 National Trails receive grant funding from Natural England. This is allocated using a nationally agreed formula and the amount (matched at a minimum rate of 3:1 by local authority and local partnership contributions) is provided to help sustain the trails in good condition and provide the basis around which all additional development works take place⁶. CCB undertake maintenance of the section of National Trail within the DCO boundary on behalf of Natural England.
- 5.1.9 The National Trail would continue to be funded and maintained by Natural England and CCB as per the existing arrangement, except that:

⁶ National Trails Annual Report 2019/20 (<https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/NT-Annual-Report-19-20.pdf>)

- Gloucestershire County Council would maintain:
 - the Air Balloon Way, which will carry the National Trail where it routes along south of the Cotswolds Way crossing.
 - the highway which will carry the National Trail where it routes along the short section of Cold Slad Lane north of the Cotswold Way crossing.
- Highways England would maintain the Cotswold Way crossing itself, which would carry part of the diverted National Trail.

5.1.10 Natural England and CCB's maintenance responsibilities would therefore not be any greater than under their current arrangements. They would be encouraged to engage with Gloucestershire County Council and Highways England throughout the detailed design, construction and operation of the scheme to ensure that the design and maintenance requirements are appropriate.

5.1.11 Highways England intend to enter into an agreement with Gloucestershire County Council for the funding and maintenance by Gloucestershire County Council of the proposed Public Rights of Way as part of the scheme including the Air Balloon Way, which will carry part of the diverted National Trail.

5.1.12 Highways England would fund the required diversions and associated works as part of the scheme, and would fund the maintenance of the diverted section of National Trail over the Cotswold Way crossing as part of its long term management and maintenance of its assets.

6 Assessment of alternatives (permanent diversion)

6.1.1 In deciding on the proposed permanent solution for the Cotswold Way National Trail as part of the scheme design, a number of alternatives were considered. These are described in turn below.

6.2 At Grade solution

6.2.1 As the current arrangement crosses the A417 at grade, a similar solution was considered and discounted very early on in the project design development. Whereas the current route runs alongside the A417 and crosses at the Air Balloon Roundabout, the proposed scheme design would mean the National Trail having to cross the full extent of the mainline carriageway, which is considered unacceptable given the widening of the carriageway as part of the works and the opportunity to bring enhancement to the National Trail through exploring a grade separated alternative. This option was therefore discounted primarily on the basis of safety and user experience.

6.3 Green Bridge on Crickley Hill

6.3.1 During previous iterations of the scheme, a green bridge was proposed to connect across the A417 and join Crickley Hill to the area north of Barrow Wake. As part of this proposal, the Cotswold Way National Trail would have run across the green bridge, adjacent to but segregated from the wildlife corridor.

6.3.2 As a result of feedback received during the 2019 consultation, ongoing discussions with stakeholders and emerging survey data, the green bridge was removed from the scheme. While it would have provided benefits to the area, concerns were raised about its location, purpose, scale and visual impact, and its effect on veteran trees and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

6.3.3 Following the removal of the green bridge from the scheme, Highways England reviewed how best to meet the scheme objectives and the landscape-led vision. It was decided that opportunities for two strategic walking, cycling and horse riding connections would be explored further, including a crossing to carry the Cotswold Way National Trail, and another to carry the Gloucestershire Way long distance path. The alternatives considered as part of this review are explained further below.

6.4 Cotswold Way crossing

6.4.1 In exploring opportunities for the Cotswold Way crossing, Highways England considered a number of locations across the scheme. Due to the topographical constraints, landowner feedback and environmental features, and the width of the carriageway in the vicinity of the current route of the National trail, many options were ruled out at early stage of consideration.

6.4.2 The broad alignment of the crossing as now proposed was selected as the preferred crossing point because of:

- the favourable topography in this location supporting a feasible engineering solution;
- the ability to launch and land the bridge without impacting any sensitive ecological habitats;

- the ability to launch and land the bridge without effecting inalienable land in the ownership of the National Trust; and
- the connectivity offered by the route, which would keep the National Trail broadly along its authored alignment.

6.4.3 Upon choosing the crossing location, a number of different bridge types were considered and reviewed with specialists from the project's construction and buildability, environmental and design teams. The selected bridge form and type was selected in order to reduce the effect of the crossing on the landscape, with the proposed steel structure allowing a slenderer structure.

6.4.4 Aesthetics and surfacing will be agreed at the detailed design stage.

7 Assessment of alternatives (temporary diversion)

7.1.1 In deciding on the proposed temporary diversion for the Cotswold Way National Trail as part of the scheme design, a number of alternatives were considered. These are described in turn below.

7.2 At Grade solution

7.2.1 During construction, in the period up until July 2025 the existing at grade route of the National Trail alongside the existing A417 and its crossing at the existing Air Balloon Roundabout will continue to be available, without conflicting with construction activities. However, around July 2025, traffic will then be switched from the existing A417 between the existing Air Balloon Roundabout and Cowley junction onto the proposed new section of A417. At that point the existing A417 will then become part of a construction site. For a period of around 10 months it would be unsafe for pedestrians to access the area, and the National Trail's crossing at the existing Air Balloon Roundabout will no longer continue to be available due to the conflict with construction activities and heavy construction plant machinery.

7.3 Cotswold Way crossing

7.3.1 A temporary grade separated crossing in the vicinity of the location of the proposed Cotswold Way crossing or Air Balloon Roundabout has been investigated, but was found to be impossible due to the construction works, existing traffic location and the levels of the existing ground.

7.4 Grove Farm underpass

7.4.1 A temporary grade separated crossing in the vicinity of the location of the proposed Grove Farm underpass, or using the underpass itself, has also been investigated but was found to be impossible due to the construction works and the necessary phasing of construction activities meaning it would not be available for pedestrians to use for the period required.

7.5 Gloucestershire Way crossing

7.5.1 The temporary use of the Gloucestershire Way crossing for the purposes of a temporary diversion of the National Trail would be feasible and safe.

7.5.2 The intended early re-provision of Public Rights of Way as part of the early construction phase of the scheme to help limit periods where access is affected to a minimum will ensure the Gloucestershire Way crossing is available for users of the National Trail during the period of around 10 months from around July 2025 when the diversion during construction is required.

7.5.3 It is anticipated that with the implementation of management and appropriate mitigation as identified in the PRow Management Plan (ES Appendix 2.1 Environmental Management Plan Annex F (Document Reference 6.4, APP-323)) the users of the National Trail would benefit from appropriate alternative routes utilising the Gloucestershire Way crossing during construction, until the Cotswold Way crossing is opened around July 2026.

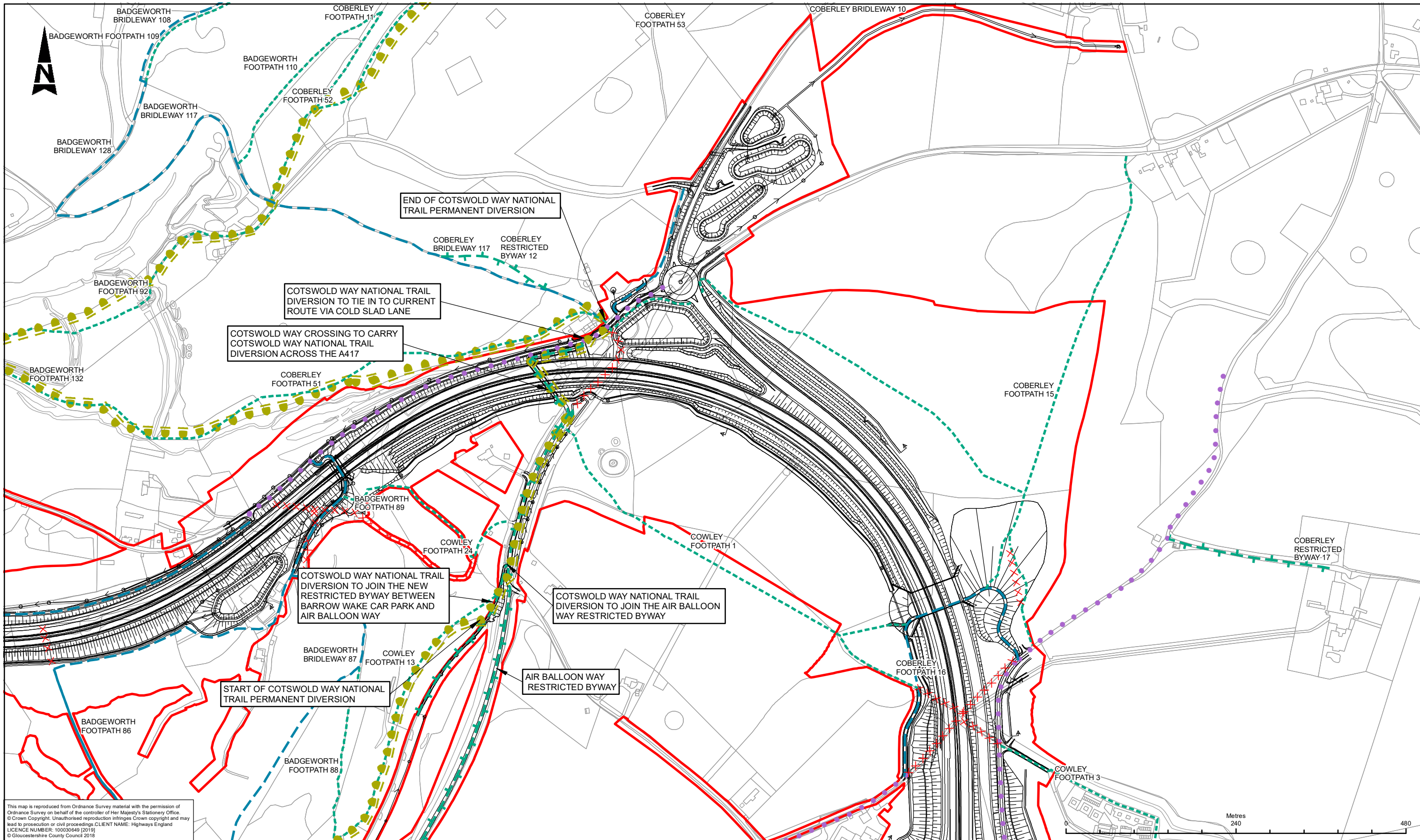
8 Conclusion

- 8.1.1 This report sets out for approval by the Secretary of State, as part of the determination process for the DCO application for the scheme, our proposals for the Cotswold Way National Trail.
- 8.1.2 This report, which has been prepared in consultation with Natural England, demonstrates that the proposals are appropriate and necessary in order to facilitate a nationally significant infrastructure project and improve connectivity for users of the Cotswold Way.
- 8.1.3 In accordance with Requirement 20 of the draft DCO, should the Secretary of State be minded to grant the DCO for the scheme, the Cotswold Way National Trail shall be varied in accordance with this report.

Appendices

Appendix A Proposed permanent diversion

A.1 A plan showing the proposed permanent diversion



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- LEGEND**
- ✕ ✕ ✕ STOPPED UP
 - WCH CONNECTION VIA NEW OR EXISTING HIGHWAY WITH PUBLIC ACCESS RIGHTS
 - + BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC
 - BRIDLEWAY
 - NATIONAL TRAIL
 - FOOTPATH
 - RESTRICTED BYWAY
 - DCO BOUNDARY

SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION	
IN ADDITION TO THE HAZARDS RISKS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE TYPES OF WORK DETAILED ON THIS DRAWING, NOTE THE FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT RESIDUAL RISKS (REFERENCE SHALL ALSO BE MADE IN THE DESIGN HAZARD LOG)	
CONSTRUCTION	NONE
MAINTENANCE / CLEANING	NONE
USE	NONE
DECOMMISSIONING / DEMOLITION	NONE
Rev.	Date Description

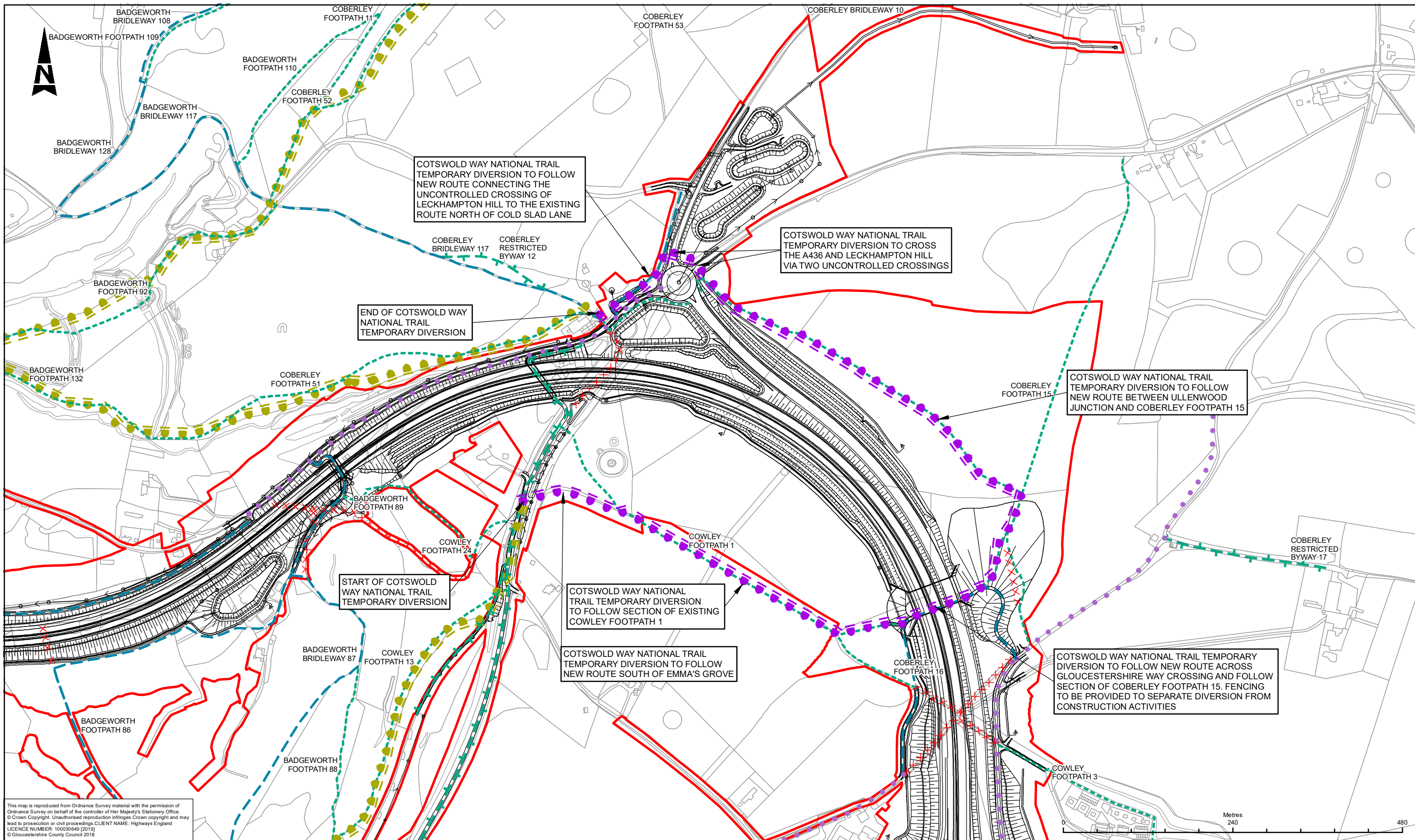
Rev.	Date	Description	By	Chk'd	App'd	Auth'd
C01	24/05/21	APPLICATION SUBMISSION (MAY 2021)	EB	DG	JP	SW

Client	highways england
Subsidiary	A3
Drawing Status	STAGE COMPLETED

Project Title		A417 MISSING LINK			
Drawing Title		COTSWOLD WAY NATIONAL TRAIL PERMANENT DIVERSION			
Scale	1:5,000	By	EB	Checked	DG
Original Size	A3	Date	24/05/21	Date	24/05/21
Approved	JP	Authorised	SW		
Drawing Number	HE PIN	Originator	Volume	Revision	
HE551505 - ARP		ENM		C01	
X_XX_XXXX_X	-DR-LE-000016				

Appendix B Proposed temporary diversion during construction

B.1 A plan showing the proposed temporary diversion during construction



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LEGEND

- COTSWOLD WAY NATIONAL TRAIL - TEMPORARY DIVERSION
- STOPPED UP
- WCH CONNECTION VIA NEW OR EXISTING HIGHWAY WITH PUBLIC ACCESS RIGHTS
- BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC
- BRIDLEWAY
- NATIONAL TRAIL
- FOOTPATH
- RESTRICTED BYWAY
- DCO BOUNDARY

SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

IN ADDITION TO THE HAZARDS RISKS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE TYPES OF WORK DETAILED ON THIS DRAWING, NOTE THE FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT RESIDUAL RISKS (REFERENCE SHALL ALSO BE MADE IN THE DESIGN HAZARD LOG)

CONSTRUCTION	NONE
MAINTENANCE / CLEANING	NONE
USE	NONE
DECOMMISSIONING / DEMOLITION	NONE

Rev.	Date	Description	By	Chk'd	App'd	Auth'd
C01	24/05/21	APPLICATION SUBMISSION (MAY 2021)	EB	DG	JP	SW

Subsidiary	A3	Drawing Status	STAGE COMPLETED	Project Title	A417 MISSING LINK								
				Drawing Title	COTSWOLD WAY NATIONAL TRAIL TEMPORARY DIVERSION								
				Scale	1:5,000	By	EB	Checked	DG	Approved	JP	Authorised	SW
				Original Size	A3	Date	24/05/21	Date	24/05/21	Date	24/05/21	Date	24/05/21
				Drawing Number	HE PIN	Originator	ARP	Volume	ENM	Location	X_XX_XXXX_X	Type	DR

Appendix C

C.1 A summary of consultation on the diversion of the National Trail

- C.1.1.1 Highways England has been in consultation with Natural England and CCB about the diversion of the National Trail (and other associated matters) as part of the Walking, Cycling and Horse riding Technical Working Group (WCH TWG) since it was formed in July 2019. Further focused meetings and collaborative planning sessions have been held with Natural England and CCB as the parties have continued communicating throughout the design and development of the scheme. Engagement on the diversion of the National Trail has also involved other interested organisations when appropriate, for example with the Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Officer, when discussing appropriate routes and interfaces with the PRoW network.
- C.1.1.2 The engagement activities outlined below covers formal consultation with Natural England and CCB (and other interested organisations), and engagement which pertains to matters associated with the diversion of the National Trail.
- C.1.1.3 Highways England has also entered into Statements of Common Ground with Natural England and CCB (separately), where a full summary of consultation is provided. Other exchanges, such as technical notes, requests for information or clarification points are not detailed below, but are available on request.

Table C-1 Summary of consultation on the diversion of the National Trail

Date	Method	Parties involved	Relevant matters discussed
2 July 2019	Technical Working Group	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. CCB 4. Cotswold District Council 5. Environment Agency 6. GCC 7. Historic England 8. National Trust 9. Tewkesbury District Council 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The need to obtain GIS data for mapping to make sure the baseline reflects the latest definitive maps. b) Places such as Leckhampton Hill and Seven Springs Layby (both joining the Air Balloon Roundabout) identified as a key location where people park and walk. c) Barrow Wake was identified as a key place for people to walk and enjoy the views via the Cotswold Way National Trail. d) The need for diversions of walking, cycling and horse riding routes/Public Rights of Way. e) The importance of reconnecting and upgrading footpaths with connections to existing open land. f) Walking, cycling and horse riding movements and associated environmental impacts on Crickley Hill Country Park and Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. g) The opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding surrounding Gloucestershire Way and link into the wider rights of way network.

Date	Method	Parties involved	Relevant matters discussed
8 October 2019	Focused Walking, Cycling and Horse riding Technical working group meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 	Highways England provided an update on the scheme design and set out the Terms of Reference and Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) process. Feedback was sought from the group on the draft Public Rights of Way Management Plan and the proposals it contained, as well as the baseline and methodology of the assessment underpinning it. In particular, the diversion of the National Trail was discussed and welcomed.
27 September 2019 to 8 November 2019	Statutory public consultation	All	Natural England and CCB were notified on 27th September 2019 by letter and/or email of the statutory consultation and provided with a deadline to submit their responses (11.59pm on 8th November 2019). The statutory consultation sought views on the scheme design and the Preliminary Environmental Information which was published for the consultation, including proposals for Public Rights of Way and the diversion of the National Trail.
27 November 2019	Walking, Cycling and Horse riding Technical working group meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. CCB 4. Cotswold Trail and Access Partnership 5. Disabled Ramblers 6. GCC PRoW Manager 7. GCC ThinkTravel Coordinator 8. GCC Transport Planning Department 9. GLAF 10. Gloucestershire Ramblers 11. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust 12. National Trust 	Highways England provided a project update and the change in methodology for the Environmental Impact Assessment under DMRB. The session consisted of a Public Rights of Way Management Plan workshop which discussed the scheme proposals in three sections. Feedback was sought from the group on the proposals including the diversion of the National Trail.
3 March 2020	Walking, Cycling and Horse riding Technical working group	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. British Horse Society 4. Cheltenham and Tewksbury Cycling Campaign 5. Cotswold Trail and Access Partnership 6. GCC PRoW officer 7. GCC Thinktravel co-ordinator 8. GCC Transport Planning Officer 9. GLAF 10. Gloucestershire Ramblers 11. National Trust 	<p>Highways England provided an overview of the response to statutory consultation, and then set out the updates to the scheme design that were made following the consultation. The proposals for further changes to the scheme design were set out.</p> <p>The SoCG with the group was discussed and the process for updating it.</p> <p>The majority of the meeting consisted of a workshop on the updated Public Rights of Way Management Plan in which the members' views on the updated proposals were sought. An update on the programme of the scheme was provided.</p>

Date	Method	Parties involved	Relevant matters discussed
22 July 2020	Combined Technical Working Group meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. CCB 4. All other Technical Working Group members 	<p>Project update following delay to programme, setting out the key changes to the design and the amended timescales. Invited questions from stakeholders during the session. A presentation and Q&A summarising the session was subsequently issued to all attendees (on 11th August).</p>
12 August 2020	Walking, Cycling and Horse riding Technical working group meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. Active Gloucestershire 4. British Horse Society 5. Cheltenham and Tewksbury Cycling Campaign 6. Cotswold Trail and Access Partnership 7. GCC PRoW officer 8. GCC Thinktravel co-ordinator 9. GCC Transport Planning Officer 10. GLAF 11. Gloucestershire Ramblers 12. National Trust 13. CPRE 14. Disabled Ramblers 15. Sustrans 16. Cotswold District Council 17. Woodland Trust 	<p>Highways England provided an update on how the design changes in the scheme have resulted in changes to the Public Rights of Way network including proposals for the diversion of the National Trail. Feedback was sought from the group and Q&A on the proposals. The next steps were outlined including the issue of the draft updated Public Rights of Way Management Plan, the upcoming statutory consultation and the SoCG process.</p>
28 August 2020	Email	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. CCB 4. All other Technical Working Group members 	<p>Highways England shared with the group the draft General Arrangement and Profile plans for the scheme, ahead of the supplementary public consultation. It was explained that the information was work in progress, draft and confidential and should only be shared within their organisation where there is a legitimate reason to do so. This was followed up with an email on 1 September sharing the draft Public Rights of Way Management Plan as well, including the proposed diversion of the National Trail.</p>

Date	Method	Parties involved	Relevant matters discussed
29 September 2020	Walking, Cycling and Horse riding Technical working group meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. Active Gloucestershire 4. British Horse Society 5. Cheltenham and Tewksbury Cycling Campaign 6. Disabled Ramblers 7. GCC PRoW officer 8. GLAF 9. Gloucestershire Ramblers 10. National Trust 11. Trail Riders Fellowship 	<p>Meeting to provide initial feedback on the draft Public Rights of Way Management Plan, draft Chapter 12 Population and Health of the PEI report and progress the SoCG in light of the latest scheme design. Key areas for improvement expressed included an opportunity to carry on the restricted byway as part of the repurposed A417 along the edge of the replacement Common Land and across the Cotswold Way crossing. This would allow Highways England to extend the Common Land further and avoid impact on the SSSI at Barrow Wake. This would involve reclassification of the National Trail where it crosses the Cotswold Way crossing from its current route along a public road to restricted byway status.</p>
13 October 2020	Supplementary statutory public consultation	All	<p>Natural England and CCB were notified of the supplementary statutory consultation and provided with a deadline to submit their responses (11.59pm on 12 November 2020). The consultation sought views on the revised scheme design and the 2020 Preliminary Environmental Information which was published for the consultation, including the proposed diversion of the National Trail.</p>
20 October 2020	Focused meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. CCB 4. GCC PRoW officer 	<p>Meeting to discuss the diversion of the National Trail and associated requirements as part of the scheme and its DCO application</p>
18 January 2021	Email	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. CCB 4. All other Technical Working Group members 	<p>Email to confirm intention to issue an emailed letter from Highways England confirming all of the design changes adopted since the public consultation that was held in Autumn 2020. Providing thanks for comments in response to the consultation, on the draft SoCG and draft Public Rights of Way Management Plan.</p>
29 January 2021	Email	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. CCB 4. All other Technical Working Group members 	<p>Email to provide an update and agenda for 4 February meeting, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A PowerPoint presentation to inform the meeting on 4 February • A copy of the draft Public Rights of Way Management Plan • A copy of the draft Public Rights of Way Management Plan Proposals Drawings • A copy of the latest SoCG document

Date	Method	Parties involved	Relevant matters discussed
4 February 2021	Walking, Cycling and Horse riding Technical working group meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. Active Gloucestershire 4. Cowley and Birdlip Parish Council 5. British Horse Society 6. Cheltenham and Tewksbury Cycling Campaign 7. Coberley Parish Council 8. Cotswold Way Association 9. Disabled Ramblers 10. GCC 11. GLAF 12. Gloucestershire Ramblers 13. National Trust 14. Trail Riders Fellowship 15. CPRE 	Meeting to provide feedback on the design fix for assessment, discuss the Public Rights of Way Management Plan proposals (as also outlined in ES Chapter 12), and progress the SoCG. A review of each of the proposals for PRoW as set out in the Public Rights of Way Management Plan was held to better understand where each party agreed or disagreed. All parties agreed with the proposed diversion of the National Trail across the Cotswold Way crossing.
24 February 2021	Email	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. CCB 4. All other Technical Working Group members 	Email to provide a copy of the latest SoCG document for comment in advance of the 29 March meeting
4 May 2021	Focused meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. CCB 	Meeting to discuss the draft National Trail Diversion Report and associated requirements as part of the scheme and its DCO application
4 May 2021	Email	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 3. CCB 4. GCC 	Email to provide draft National Trail Diversion Report for final comments following focused meeting held on the same day
1 February 2022	Email	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 	Email to provide Natural England sight of Highways England's response to the ExA's Rule 17 request on 14 January 2022
2 February 2022	Email	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 	Email to confirm proposed position from Natural England following Highways England's position in Rule 17 response.
1 March 2022	Meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highways England 2. Natural England 	Meeting to discuss the draft National Trail Diversion Report and ongoing engagement with Defra