



A303

Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling Scheme

Statement of Community Consultation

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1 A303 Sparkford to Ilchester – Statement of Community Consultation

- 1.1.1 Highways England is publishing this Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) in connection with a proposed improvement to the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester in Somerset. The purpose of this document is to set out how we will consult the local community about our proposal. The document also provides background to the project and how the application to build it will progress.

2 The Application

- 2.1.1 Highways England is developing this scheme under the Planning Act 2008 and is publishing this statement under Section 47 of that Act. It has consulted Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council, the local authorities responsible for the area where the project will be built, about plans to consult the local community.
- 2.1.2 The Planning Act 2008 requires Highways England to make an application to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to build the scheme. The Secretary of State's role is to consider whether authorisation should be given for major infrastructure projects like this scheme. Highways England anticipates that a DCO application for the scheme will be published in summer 2018. The Planning Inspectorate will examine the DCO application and the Secretary of State will decide on whether the scheme should go ahead.
- 2.1.3 Government policy relating to the development of the national road network is set out in the National Networks National Policy Statement (NNNPS). This provides the framework for DCO applications to be considered against.
- 2.1.4 When Highways England submits its DCO application, the Secretary of State must consider whether our consultation has been adequate. This pre-application consultation will be important in relation to the examination process that follows after an application is accepted by the Planning Inspectorate. Therefore, the best time to provide feedback on this scheme is now by taking part in this pre-application consultation.
- 2.1.5 You can find more information about the Planning Inspectorate and the Planning Act 2008 on the Gov.uk website: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk> or by calling the Planning Inspectorate on 0303 444 5000.

3 The Scheme

- 3.1.1 The A303/A358 corridor provides vital east-west connectivity between the south west and London and the south east for people, communities and businesses, including the tourism industry which is so important to the south west. However, there are problems along the route including several single carriageway sections where road users can suffer congestion and long delays. The problems are even worse at peak holiday times during the summer months and on weekends.
- 3.1.2 In recognition of this and the harmful effects this has on the south west's economy, the Government's Road Investment Strategy (RIS) sets out the intention to transform connectivity by upgrading the A303/A358 corridor to a high quality dual carriageway from the M3 motorway to the M5 motorway at Taunton. This includes the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester.
- 3.1.3 The scheme proposals are for a dual carriageway that starts east of Podimore Roundabout and follows the alignment of the existing A303 to Downhead.
- 3.1.4 Travelling eastwards, the route moves north of the existing A303 single carriageway, allowing the existing road to be retained for use as a parallel local road in this section.
- 3.1.5 The route then rises up West Camel Hill before crossing over the existing A303 at the junction with Steart Hill / Howell Hill. The route then takes a southerly alignment briefly before meeting up with the existing road again to pass between Vale Farm and the MOD signal station at Eyewell / Traits Lane.
- 3.1.6 Finally, the route then bypasses the existing Hazlegrove Roundabout to the north through the Registered Park and Garden associated with Hazlegrove House, before tying into the existing A303 north of Sparkford Village.

4 Consulting the community

- 4.1.1 In accordance with section 47 of the Planning Act 2008, Highways England is consulting people living in the vicinity of the proposed scheme.
- 4.1.2 Highways England has already undertaken 1 stage of the consultation. Stage 1 took place between February and March 2017. Consultees were asked for their views on two route options. More details, including the outcome of this consultation, are available in the stage 1 feedback report, available to download from the scheme website at www.highways.gov.uk/Sparkford-to-Ilchester, on request from Highways England, or to view for the duration of the consultation period at the display locations detailed in this SoCC.
- 4.1.3 We want to make sure that the local community, the residents, local interest groups, businesses, visitors and road users, have the opportunity to fully understand the scheme and comment on our proposals. To do this we are holding stage 2 of the consultation between January and March 2018. It will start on 26 January 2018 and will end on 9 March 2018, during which we will provide consultation information on various issues including:
- Junction layout and strategy
 - Works to the existing road (“de-trunking”) and local roads
 - Provision for non-motorised users
 - Environmental assessments and potential environmental impacts
 - Environmental mitigation measures
 - Arrangements during construction of the scheme
 - An overview of other projects proposed by Highways England along A303 / A30 / A358 corridor.
- 4.1.4 We have carried out an Environmental Impact Assessment for the scheme. The scheme is an Environmental Impact Assessment development, and therefore we are publishing Preliminary Environmental Information as part of the consultation material. This gives information about the potential environmental effects of the scheme and the measures proposed to reduce those effects, so to assist well-informed responses to the consultation.

4.1.5 Our consultation will involve:

Method	Detail
Public information events	<p>Public information events will be held at locations along the route of the scheme. These will give people an opportunity to view scheme proposals, talk to the project team and provide comments. Details of the location and times of public information events are set out in section 5.</p> <p>The public will be informed of the events through channels including advertisements in appropriate local newspapers, via our website, the media, direct communications and project updates.</p> <p>Questionnaires will be available at the exhibition events for members of the public to record their comments and these can either be left with the project team and/or sent back separately via the address noted below.</p>
Public information points	<p>Information advertising the public information events, and also providing guidance on how interested parties can provide consultation feedback, will be available at specified public information points. Details of public information points are set out in section 5.</p>
Project website	<p>A full summary of the project, copies of the supporting project documents and a questionnaire will be provided on a dedicated project website: www.highways.gov.uk/Sparkford-to-Ilchester</p>
Written communication	<p>We will send residents and businesses inside the consultation zone (see Appendix 1) a letter that invites them to attend the public events, and provides guidance on how consultation feedback can be provided to us.</p> <p>Other key stakeholder organisations and special interest groups will also receive information letters that explain scheme proposals, and the issues being consulted on. These will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish and town councils and other local groups and forums • Business organisations • Tourism organisations • Road user representative groups • Non-motorised user groups • Hard-to-reach groups <p>The letters will invite recipients to the public information events, and provide guidance on how consultation feedback can be provided to us.</p> <p>Individuals or organisations that have registered to receive further communications on the Highways England scheme website, will be sent information emails that explain the scheme proposals and the issues being consulted on. The emails will invite recipients to the public</p>

	information events, and provide guidance on how consultation feedback can be provided to us.
Project updates	At the launch of the consultation and at the point at which Highways England submits the DCO application, project updates will be produced, providing details on the proposals and reporting on the outcome of the consultation process respectively. These will be distributed to residents and community groups using the written communications described above, by e-mail to road users registering for further communications on our website, and to town and parish councils and community / area forums who wish to receive them. Copies will be made available on our website and provided on request by the project team.
Consultation brochure	<p>We will produce a consultation brochure that will provide information about the scheme proposals, the need for the scheme, and the issues being consulted on. The brochure will be available to view on the Highways England scheme website.</p> <p>The consultation brochure will also be available at public information events, and public information points.</p> <p>Copies of the consultation brochure can be provided free of charge upon request to Highways England. You can obtain copies by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visiting the scheme website at http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/A303-Sparkford-to-Ilchester • emailing the project team at A303SparkfordtoIlchesterDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk • calling the project team on 0300 123 5000 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) • writing to the project team at A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling, 2/07K Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6HA
Use of local authority and parish council communications channels	We will promote the statutory consultation through local authority and parish council communication channels, including their respective websites, newsletters and social media pages.
Elected member preview	We recognise the importance of ensuring that elected members are prepared for questions from their communities. We will invite elected members from host authorities to a preview event, as well as representatives from parish councils, prior to the start of the consultation period.
Representatives at parish councils, local	We welcome contact from local groups and forums. Where it is considered that there is a relevant interest and where a visit by us is determined to be proportionate and appropriate, we will attend a local

groups and forums	event to discuss the statutory consultation. This process will include continuing to meet with parish councils along the route, when appropriate.
Hard to reach groups	<p>An appropriate and proportionate 'hard to reach' engagement plan has been developed with the assistance and agreement of relevant local authority personnel and third sector organisations.</p> <p>Appropriate and proportionate consultation tools for 'hard to reach' groups could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations to community groups and organisations • Appropriate direct engagement with, for example, younger people, disabled people and representative groups • Provision of appropriate and accessible materials in local community / 'hard to reach' centres • Provision of appropriate and accessible materials (i.e. in large print, braille and alternative languages if requested) • Venues chosen for public events to be compliant with the Equality Act 2010 • Use of existing channels for 'hard to reach' groups, hosted by third parties such as Somerset County Council
Statutory consultation updates	The local community and other road users will be updated about the progress of the statutory consultation through channels including written communications, the Highways England website, local media, local authority websites, newsletters and social media.
Consultation feedback	<p>Written comments can be made either online at www.highways.gov.uk/Sparkford-to-Ilchester or in writing to the following addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A303SparkfordtoIlchesterDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk • A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling, 2/07K Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6HA
Media	The statutory consultation will be publicised through media channels by means of a Highways England press release detailing the consultation process and explaining how the local community and road users can provide feedback.
Establishing stakeholder groups	Having built a relationship with the local community, we will consider, in consultation with relevant town and parish councils and community / area forums, whether there is benefit in establishing a stakeholder group, to which we would invite local community nominated representatives to discuss our proposals. If a similar stakeholder group is already in existence or established by the relevant local authorities, we will participate when invited.
Social media	The consultation will be advertised using Highways England's Twitter presence.

5 Public information event venues, dates and times

5.1.1 A minimum of 4 public events will be held during the consultation period. These events will be located at strategic locations along the route. The venues will be chosen based on the suitability of the building, ease of access for all members of the local community, and available facilities. Details of the events are:

Date	Location	Time
Saturday 3 February 2018	Queen Camel Memorial Hall, High St, Queen Camel, Yeovil, BA22 7NF	10:00 – 18:00
Monday 5 February 2018	Fleet Air Arm Museum, RNAS Yeovilton, Yeovilton, Ilchester, BA22 8HT	14:00 – 20:00
Friday 9 February 2018	The Davis Hall, Howell Hill, West Camel, Yeovil, A22 7QX	14:00 – 20:00
Thursday 15 February 2018	Huish Park Stadium, Lufton Way, Yeovil BA22 8YF	14:00 – 20:00

5.2 Documents available for inspection

5.2.1 Scheme summary information, this updated SoCC, policy guidance documents and other relevant technical documents listed in Appendix 3 will be available online and will be added to throughout the course of the project at www.highways.gov.uk/Sparkford-to-Ilchester and will be available to view, free of charge during the consultation, at the inspection locations listed below:

Location	Opening hours
Wincanton Library, 7 Carrington Way, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 9JS	Monday 9.30am to 1.30pm and 2.30pm to 5pm Tuesday 9.30am to 1.30pm and 2.30pm to 5pm Wednesday 9.30am to 1.30pm and 2.30pm to 5pm Thursday Closed Friday 9.30am to 1.30pm and 2.30pm to 5pm Saturday 9.30am to 12pm Sunday Closed
Yeovil Library, King George Street, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 1PYZ	Monday 9.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5pm Tuesday 9.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 6pm Wednesday 9.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5pm Thursday 9.30am to 1pm Friday 9.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5pm Saturday 9.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4pm

	Sunday Closed
South Petherton Library, St. James Street, South Petherton, Somerset, TA13 5BS	Monday Closed Tuesday 10am to 2pm Wednesday Closed Thursday 10am to 2pm Friday 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm Saturday 9.30am to 1pm Sunday Closed
Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3XZ	Monday 9.30am to 5.30pm Tuesday 9.30am to 5.30pm Wednesday 9.30am to 7pm Thursday 9.30am to 5.30pm Friday 9.30am to 5.30pm Saturday 9.30am to 5pm Sunday Closed
Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY	Monday 8am to 5pm Tuesday 8am to 5pm Wednesday 8am to 5pm Thursday 8am to 5pm Friday 8am to 4.30pm Saturday Closed Sunday Closed
Martock Library, The Shopping Centre, Martock, Somerset, TA12 6DL	Monday 9.30am to 5pm Tuesday 9.30am to 5pm Wednesday 9.30am to 5pm Thursday Closed Friday 9.30am to 5pm Saturday 9.30am to 12pm Sunday Closed
South Somerset District Council, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2HT	Monday 8.45am to 5.15pm Tuesday 8.45am to 5.15pm Wednesday 8.45am to 5.15pm Thursday 8.45am to 5.15pm Friday 8.45am to 4.45pm Saturday Closed Sunday Closed
Talltrees Community Centre, 4 Taranto Hill, Ilchester, Yeovil BA22 8JP	Monday 8am to 3pm Tuesday 8am to 3pm Wednesday 8.45am to 3pm Thursday 8am to 3pm Friday 8am to 3pm Saturday 12.30pm – 11.59pm Sunday 1pm to 10.30pm

6 Next steps

- 6.1.1 Comments made during the consultation will be recorded and carefully considered by Highways England and will be taken into account in developing the scheme proposal. An explanation of how comments received have shaped and influenced our proposals, will be reported in a Consultation Report prepared by Highways England which will accompany the DCO application as required by Section 37(3) (c) of the Planning Act 2008. The Planning Inspectorate will decide whether the application meets the required standards to proceed to examination, and will determine whether Highways England's pre-application consultation has been adequate.
- 6.1.2 Highways England needs to collect and assess all responses to consultation before compiling the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate. To allow time to do this, it must receive feedback by 9 March 2018.
- 6.1.3 If you want to contact us or find out more about this scheme, you can:
- visit the scheme website at <http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/A303-Sparkford-to-Ilchester>
 - email the project team at A303SparkfordtoIlchesterDualling@highwaysengland.co.uk
 - call the project team on **0300 123 5000 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)**
 - write to the project team at **A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling, 2/07K Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6HA**

Appendix 1 – Consultation buffer zone map

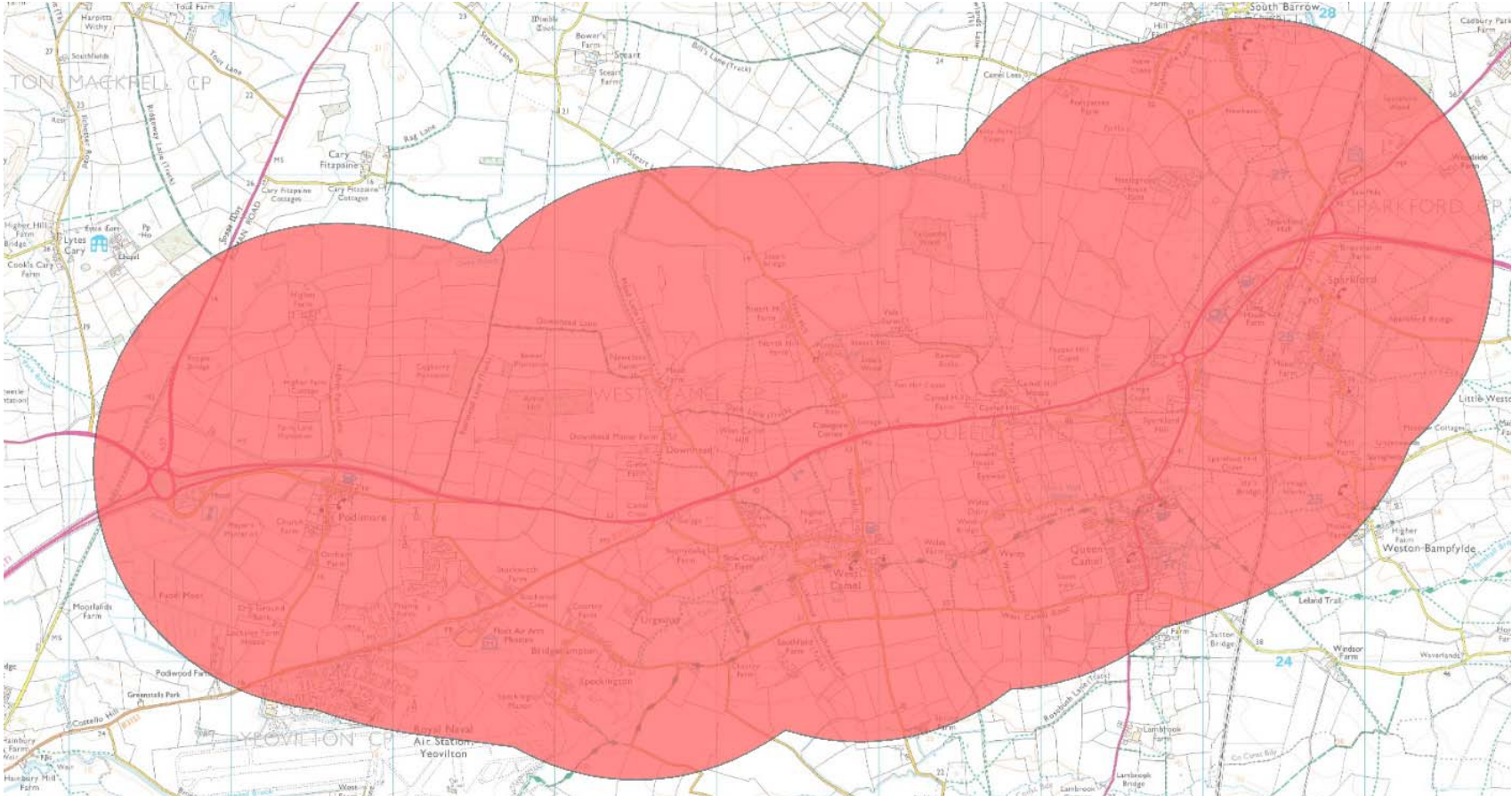


Figure 1: Consultation buffer zone map

The consultation zone covers a geographical area of approximately 1.5 kilometres from any point along the route being consulted on. In certain areas, the 1.5 kilometre zone has been extended to include additional population centres.

Appendix 2 – Local authorities

Local authorities affected by the scheme:

- Somerset County Council
- South Somerset District Council

Adjoining local authorities:

- Bath and North East Somerset Council
- Devon County Council
- Dorset County Council
- East Devon District Council
- Mendip District Council
- North Dorset District Council
- North Somerset Council
- Sedgemoor District Council
- Taunton Deane Borough Council
- West Dorset District Council
- Wiltshire Council

Following consultation with these authorities as set out in 2.1.1, regard has been paid to their responses in the following ways:

Local authority comment	Response
The draft SoCC does not contain any dates or duration of consultation at this point; for the non-statutory consultation we advised that a thirty day consultation period would be insufficient and we recommended extending the consultation period to twelve weeks.	Dates are now included. The consultation period is longer than 30 days. Highways England considers the 6 week period included in this document as appropriate in the context of similar schemes.
We previously suggested that consideration should be given to increasing the number of exhibitions from the proposed number. Whilst the draft SoCC does not contain the details of the proposed exhibitions we would recommend increasing the number from that which were carried out for the non-statutory consultation. A wider range of venues and times would allow more people to attend.	A further exhibition has been included in this document when compared to the non-statutory consultation. This includes a range of venues and times to allow more people to attend.
Whilst the scheme and the works associated with it will have a significant impact on the local communities the consultation should also ensure the views of those who travel along the route are captured.	Provision is made for engaging with road users in the document.

<p>We would suggest that a workshop for elected members of the County Council and the District Councils, to take place prior to the commencement of the public consultation, be included within the list of events so that members are prepared for the questions from their communities.</p>	<p>A preview event for elected members has been added.</p>
<p>The draft SoCC states that the consultation will be promoted through local authority and parish council communication channels. We would recommend working closely with parish councils along the route by attending meetings to explain the process and consultation opportunities.</p>	<p>Where it is considered that there is a relevant interest and where a visit by us is determined to be proportionate and appropriate, we will attend a local event to discuss the statutory consultation. This process will include continuing to meet with parish councils along the route, when appropriate.</p>
<p>It would be helpful if the range of stakeholders were set out within the SoCC; we would recommend actively engaging with businesses and the tourism sector both along the route and further afield.</p>	<p>Details of the range of stakeholders are now included in section 4.</p>
<p>We have contacts within many of the identified hard to reach groups in the county and send them regular newsletter/useful information. We can use these to share information about the consultations.</p>	<p>Information will be sent to the contact provided.</p>
<p>The only comment I have received is why no Public Information Point in Ilchester and / or Podimore village when there is one in Martock (this was from someone who lives in Ilchester)?</p> <p>My reasoning on suggesting Martock originally was because there is a public library but given that Ilchester and Podimore are alongside the route and more affected, it would make sense to address this and I understand there would be possible locations for information.</p>	<p>A public information point has now been added in Ilchester.</p>

Appendix 3 – Documents to be made available for inspection at inspection locations listed at section 5

The following documents will be made available for inspection at inspection locations listed in section 5:

- the consultation brochure
- the consultation questionnaire
- Preliminary Environmental Information the SoCC
- the Preferred Route Announcement leaflet
- the Scheme Assessment Report
- the Report on Non-statutory Consultation
- the Scheme Route map
- notice of application

If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

