

# A417

## Missing Link Report on Public Consultation

March 2019

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## Executive summary

The A417 Missing Link scheme is part of a programme of road improvements in the south west aimed at improving connectivity between the region and the rest of the country. The A417 and A419 through the Cotswolds make up one of the south west's most important road corridors and, while most of the route is dual carriageway, there's one section that isn't. Known as the 'Missing Link', this three-mile stretch of single carriageway on the A417 between the Brockworth bypass and Cowley roundabout restricts the flow of traffic, causing congestion and pollution. This leads to motorists rat-running along local roads not designed for this level of traffic, and collisions often happen. The Government's [Road Investment Strategy](#) identifies the A417 Missing Link as needing to be upgraded to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce pollution.

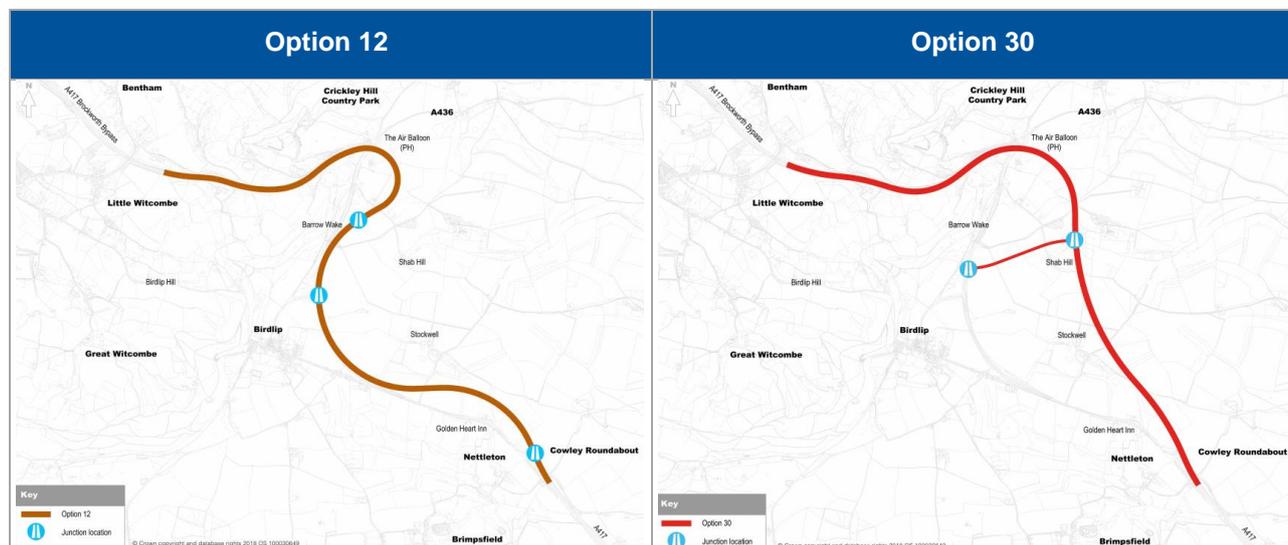
Highways England carried out a public consultation on route options for the A417 Missing Link between 15 February 2018 and 29 March 2018. This report records how the consultation was undertaken, the feedback received and Highways England's response to that feedback. It also identifies the key considerations that fed into the selection of the preferred route and those which will be taken into account as part of the continuing development of the scheme.

This non-statutory consultation was the precursor of the statutory consultation that will mark the start of the Development Consent Order process, when everyone will be able to comment on more detailed proposals of the scheme. This next stage of statutory consultation is currently planned for summer 2019.

## Scheme proposals presented for consultation

Two proposed route options were put forward for consultation as shown below in Table 0.1.

Table 0.1: Scheme objectives for the A417 Missing Link



Option 12 is a four-mile surface route which would widen existing sections of the A417 on Crickley Hill and Birdlip and include new sections of road at Nettleton and Emma's Grove. It would not include any new carriageway through Shab Hill.

Option 30 is a 3.4-mile surface route which would follow the alignment of the existing A417 at Crickley Hill and include a new section of road through Shab Hill to the east of the existing A417. It would re-join the existing road near Cowley roundabout.

The proposals were explained in a public consultation booklet published in February 2018 which can be viewed here: [https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/supporting\\_documents/A417%20Public%20Consultation%20Brochure.pdf](https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/supporting_documents/A417%20Public%20Consultation%20Brochure.pdf).

## Consultation arrangements

A variety of methods were used to inform people about the consultation, including letters sent to a range of interested parties, leaflets, posters, press releases to local and regional newspapers, and use of social media. Public events were held at six locations to give people an opportunity to view information about the scheme and speak with members of the project team, as well as to provide comments on the scheme proposals. These were attended by approximately 800 people.

A consultation website (<https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/>) was maintained throughout the consultation period to provide information on the scheme

and to enable people to submit their feedback forms online. People were also able to submit their feedback by FREEPOST, letter or email.

## Consultation response

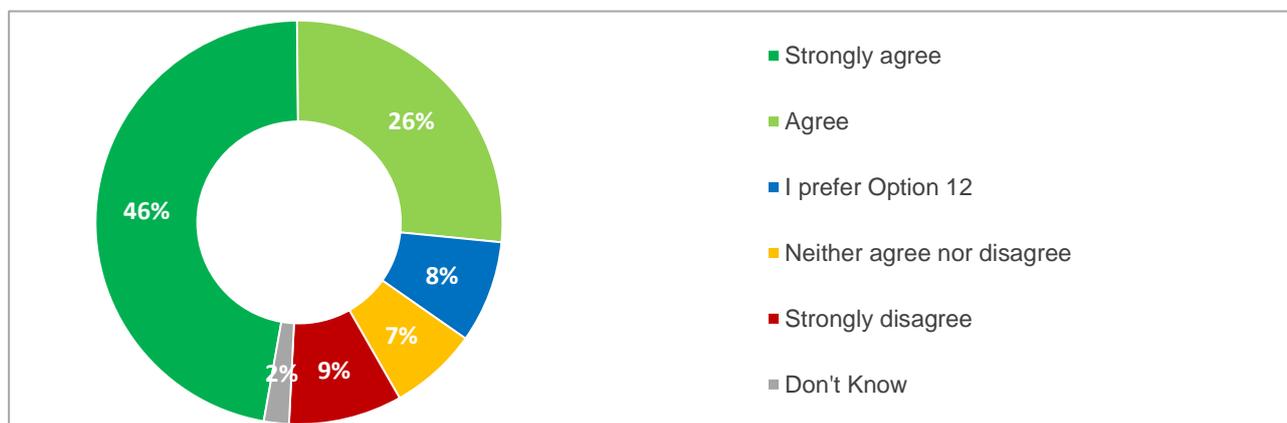
Nearly 2,000 members of the public and organisations responded to the consultation using hard copy and online feedback forms, letters and emails. A breakdown of the total response numbers is provided in Table 0.2.

Table 0.2: Number of consultation responses received by format

Response format	Number of responses received
Questionnaire responses	1,913
Emails and letters	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,951</b>

The consultation responses revealed that public opinion is supportive of the A417 Missing Link scheme and, in particular, of Option 30. Figure 0.1 below shows the level of agreement for Highways England’s assessment that Option 30 provides the best opportunity to meet the scheme’s objectives.

Figure 0.1: Preferences on scheme proposals from questionnaire responses



Responses to the consultation were also received from twenty-four statutory bodies and eighteen non-statutory bodies and organisations.

The feedback showed there was strong agreement that something needs to be done to address the issues on the A417 Missing Link, with differences of opinion on whether Option 12 or 30, or another solution, would best achieve the objectives for the scheme. The majority of respondents were in support of Option 30 with a significantly smaller

number supporting Option 12. Apart from expressions of support for the two proposed options as presented, other views were that Highways England should:

- pursue one of the shortlisted tunnel options
- modify one of the proposed options by extending the proposed cuttings or creating cut and cover tunnels in various locations
- widen the existing road to a dual carriageway, with amendments to Air Balloon roundabout
- implement other transport solutions that do not involve building a new road
- Concerns about impacts on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, cultural heritage, sites of special scientific interest, costs of the scheme and potential impact on local communities and businesses also emerged.

## Key considerations

Aside from expressions of support or opposition to the scheme proposals put forward for consultation, comments received have fallen broadly into three categories:

- comments about options that were considered and dismissed at earlier stages of the scheme's development, as part of the option appraisal and sifting undertaken prior to consultation
- comments that have informed the further appraisal and assessment of the options, leading to the choice of the preferred route
- comments that will be taken into consideration as part of the continuing development of the scheme

These matters, raised in responses by individuals, organisations and groups, both statutory and non-statutory, have been considered alongside the results of further assessment work to inform the choice of Option 30 as the preferred route.

This assessment work is set out in the Scheme Assessment Report, which can be viewed online at <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/>.

Matters raised relating to design issues and other areas that do not directly impact the choice of preferred route will be considered and addressed in the ongoing design and development of the scheme and associated mitigation measures for minimising its impact. This will take place throughout future stages of the scheme's development, with more detailed scheme proposals being presented at a further period of public consultation (currently scheduled for summer 2019).

## **Effectiveness and benefits of consultation**

The widespread promotion of the consultation was successful in reaching, informing and engaging target audiences. The consultation reached local communities, businesses and wider audiences with an interest in the A417 Missing Link.

Many attending the public exhibitions were supportive of the consultation process, and complimentary about the quality of the display material and the professionalism of staff in attendance.

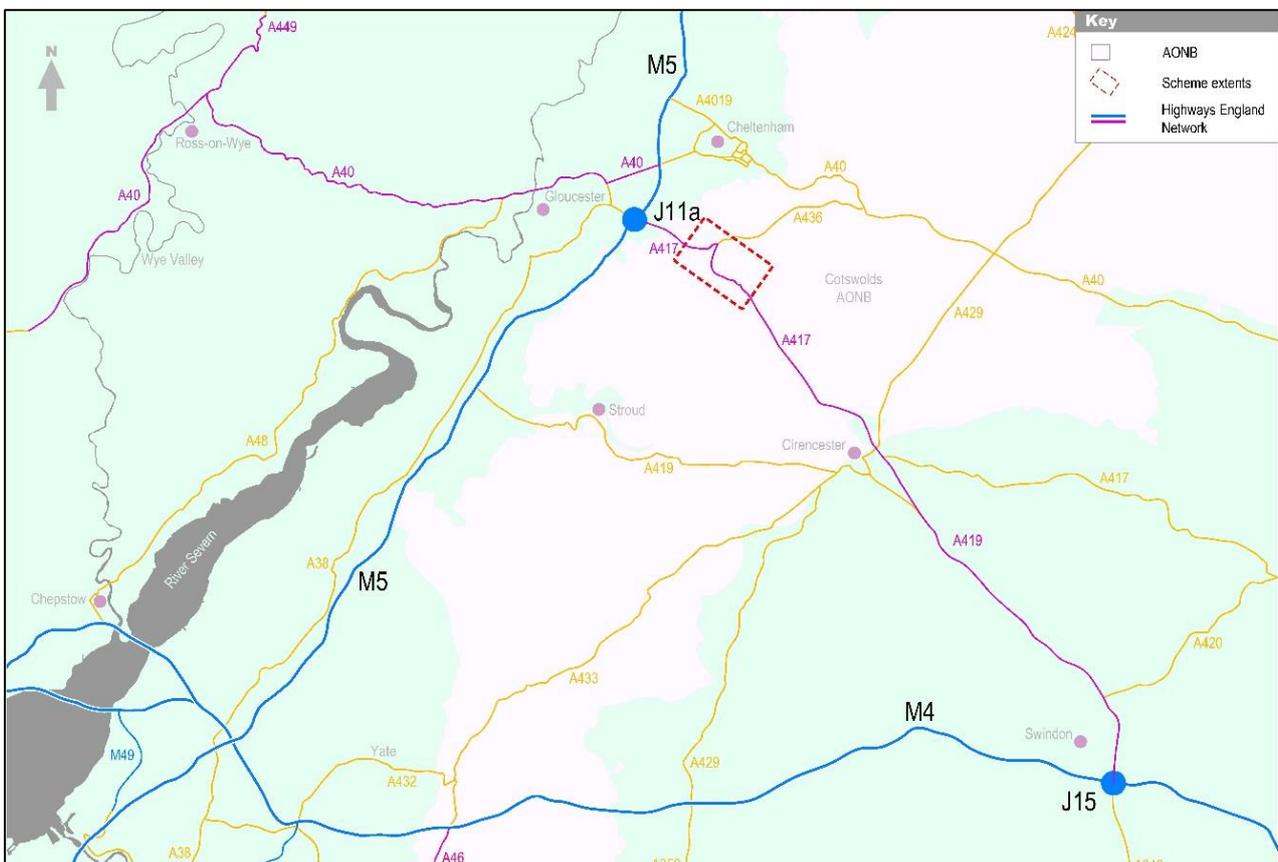
There were also comments challenging the validity of the consultation, the lack of tunnel options shown during the consultation and whether sufficient information was provided on certain issues.

In terms of its purpose, this phase of non-statutory consultation was successful in achieving its objectives. It has proved effective in informing a wide audience about the scheme and in securing valuable feedback, which included local knowledge and experience, to help inform the choice of preferred route.

# 1. Introduction

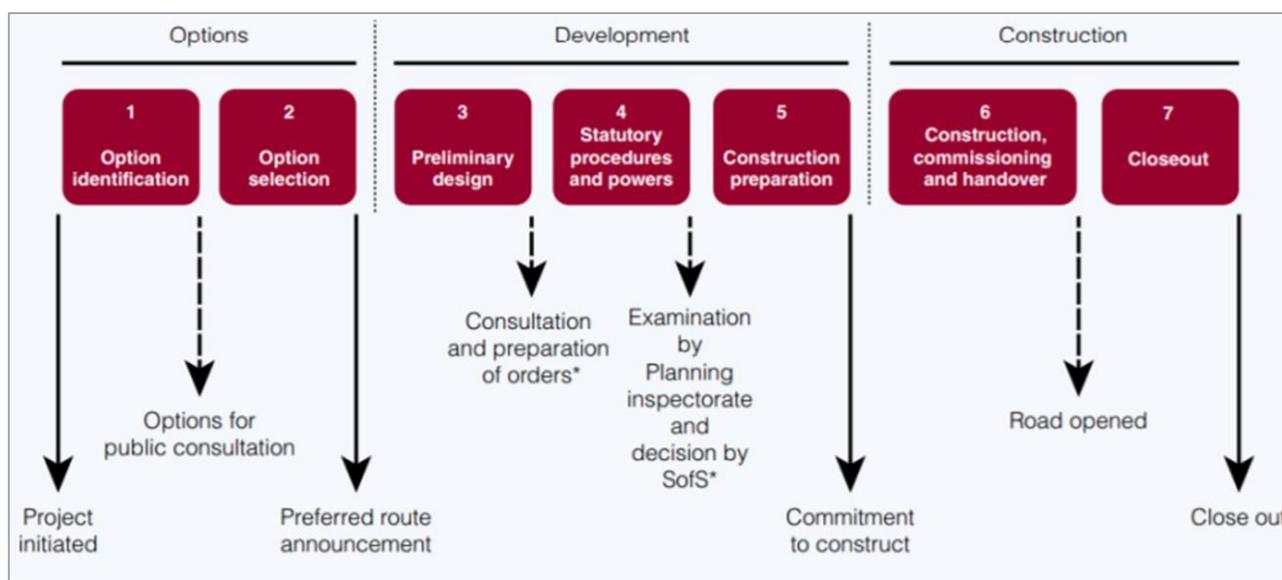
- 1.1.1. This report has been prepared to record the non-statutory public consultation by Highways England between 15 February 2018 and 29 March 2018 on its proposals for improving the A417 Missing Link. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of how the consultation was undertaken and details of the issues and comments raised, and explain how Highways England has considered them and responded.
- 1.1.2. In 2014, the Department for Transport announced its five-year investment programme, known as the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) 2015–2020, for making improvements to the strategic road network across England. As part of this strategy, the Department for Transport made money available to develop a scheme to upgrade the remaining single carriageway section of the A417. This section is between Cowley roundabout and the Brockworth bypass and is known as the Missing Link.
- 1.1.3. Together, the A417 and A419 make up one of the south west’s most important road corridors, linking the M5 at Gloucester (junction 11A) to the M4 at Swindon (junction 15) and helping people get to work and school and visit family and friends.

Figure 1.1: The location of the Missing Link on the strategic road network



1.1.4. Highways England has set out a Project Control Framework which defines the key stages of project delivery for this scheme. It is shown below in Figure 1.2. Highways England chose to carry out a non-statutory consultation at an early stage in the project development, following the options identification stage, so it could seek the views of the public and organisations to help inform the development and selection of a preferred route. Details of how the options were identified, sifted and appraised to determine which were taken forward to public consultation are set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, which can be viewed online at <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/>.

Figure 1.2: Phases and stages of Highways England's Project Control Framework



\*Nationally significant infrastructure projects only.

1.1.5. Feedback from this route options consultation will inform the development and selection of the preferred route. Following the announcement of the preferred route, Highways England will carry out further work on the selected option, after which a second (statutory) public consultation will be held. This process will be followed by an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO), where the proposals will be examined in detail by the Planning Inspectorate before a decision is made by the Secretary of State. If consent is granted, preparations for start of construction would follow. This report is set out as follows:

- **Chapter 2 Introduction**
- **Chapter 3 – Scheme proposals**
  - Chapter 3 summarises the scheme proposals that were put forward for consultation.
- **Chapter 4 – How Highways England undertook consultation**
  - Chapter 4 sets out:
    - When consultation took place

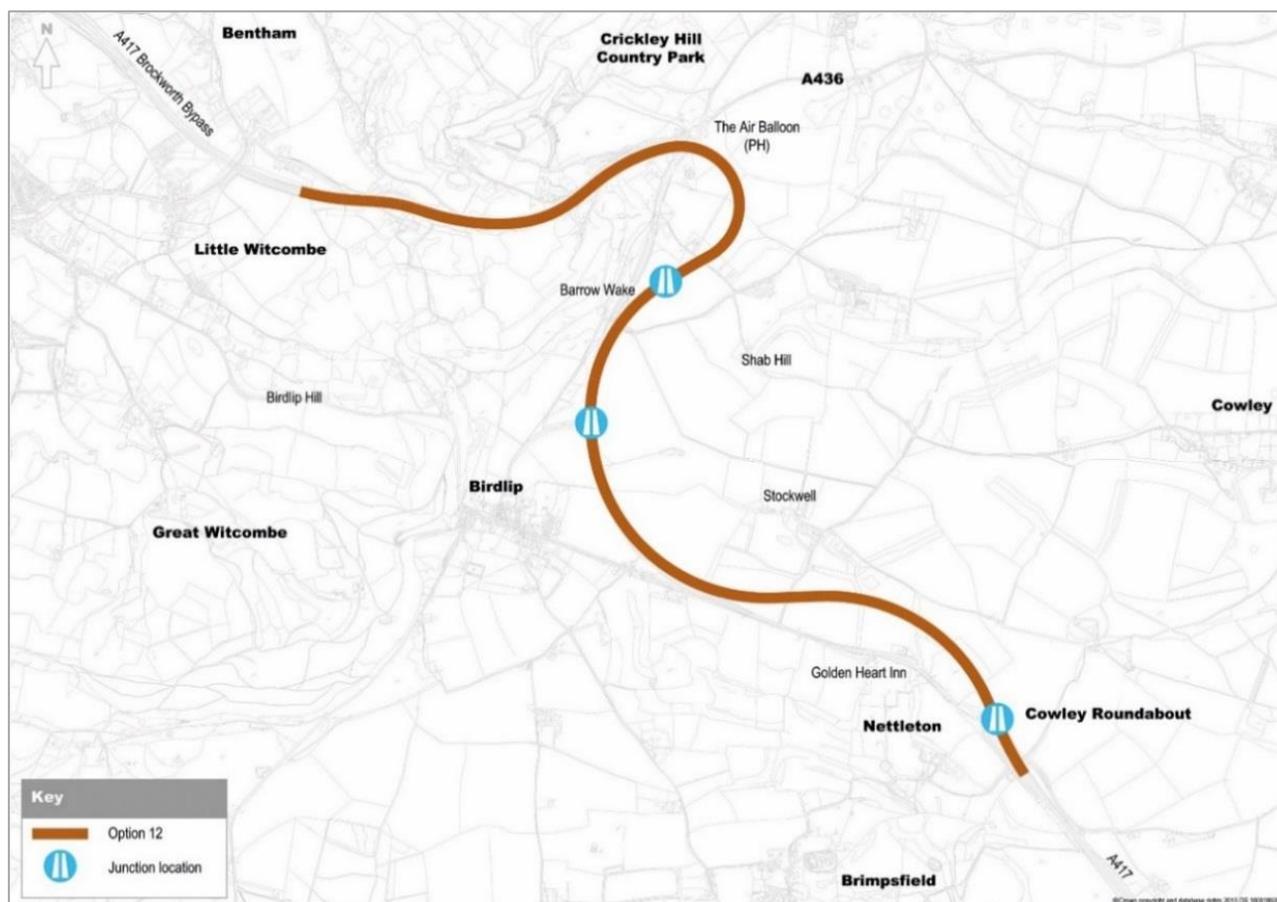
- Who was consulted
- How consultation was carried out
- **Chapter 5 – Overview of consultation feedback**
  - Chapter 5 presents the overall number of responses received and the preferences expressed by people responding via the feedback form and other means, including letters and emails.
- **Chapter 6 – Summary of feedback and key considerations**
  - Chapter 6 summarises feedback received and the key issues that have informed the choice of preferred route for the scheme and its continued development.
- **Chapter 7 – Matters raised and Highways England’s response**
  - Chapter 7 sets out the specific matters raised by members of the public, statutory and non-statutory organisations, and by landowners, along with Highways England’s response.
- **Chapter 8 – Conclusions**
  - Chapter 8 concludes on the effectiveness of the consultation, both in raising awareness of the scheme proposals and securing feedback that has helped inform the choice of preferred route.

## 2. A417 Missing Link scheme proposals

### 2.1. Scheme proposals

- 2.1.1. The proposals emerged from a thorough process of identifying route options. A wide range of options were considered initially and these were gradually narrowed using four broad steps. Details of the route options and identification and assessment process can be found in the Technical Appraisal Report and a summary of this process was presented in the consultation booklet, published at the start of consultation on 15 February 2018. The consultation booklet can be viewed online at [https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/supporting\\_documents/A417%20Public%20Consultation%20Brochure.pdf](https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/supporting_documents/A417%20Public%20Consultation%20Brochure.pdf). Chapter 3 provides more details on the consultation procedure, including what was published to inform the public about the proposals being taken forward for consultation.
- 2.1.2. Two proposed options were presented in the consultation booklet, Option 12 (Figure 2.1) and Option 30 (Figure 2.2).

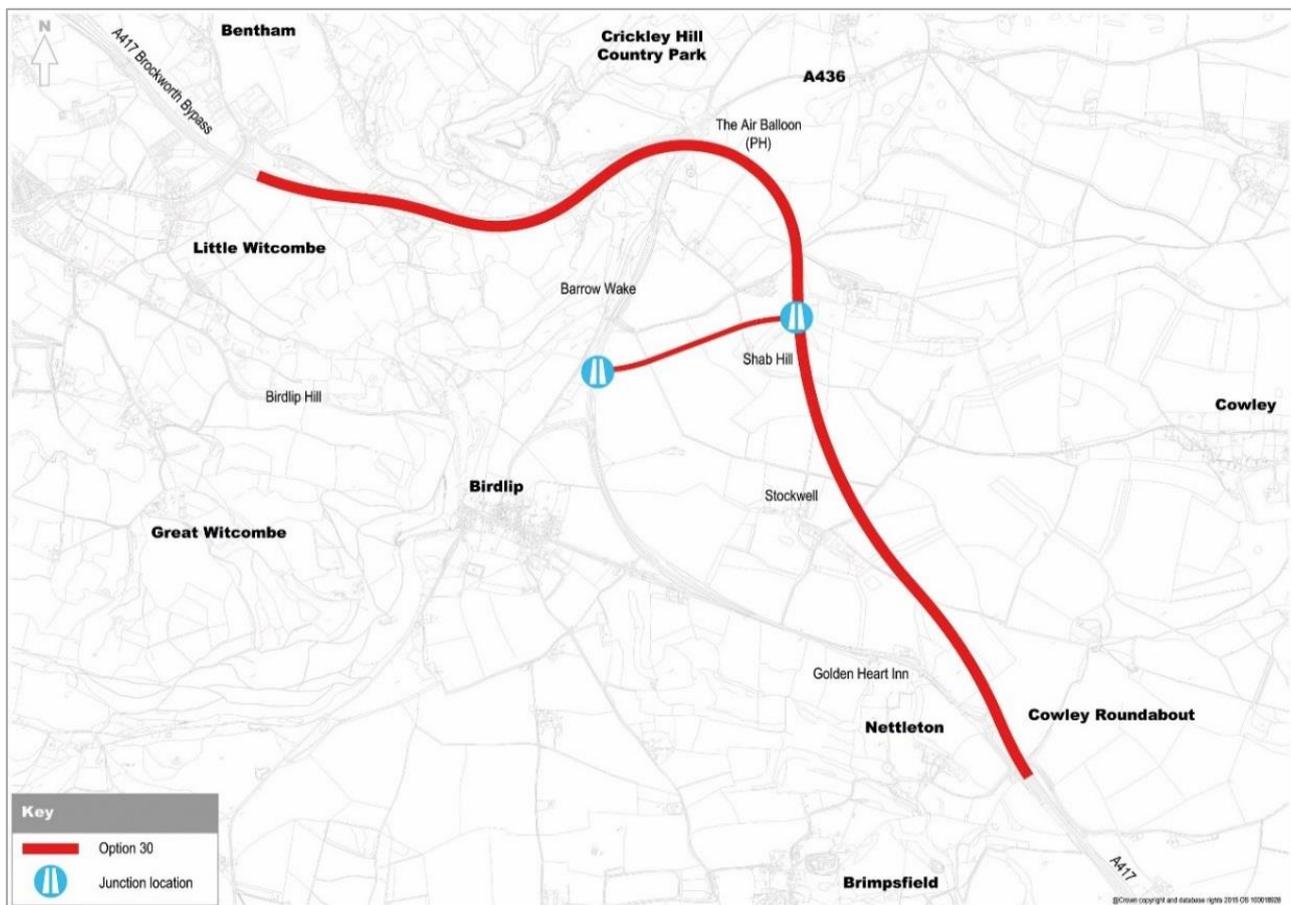
Figure 2.1: An illustration of Option 12



2.1.3. The main features of Option 12 are:

- A four-mile surface route which would widen existing sections of the existing A417 on Crickley Hill and Birdlip, and include new sections of road at Nettleton and Emma's Grove.
- Three new junctions: one at Cowley roundabout, one on the existing A417 close to the B4070 junction at Birdlip, and one to the north of Barrow Wake.
- Three lanes of carriageway going up Crickley Hill and two coming down.

Figure 2.2: An illustration of Option 30



2.1.4. The main features of Option 30 are:

- A 3.4-mile surface route which would follow the alignment of the existing A417 at Crickley Hill, and include a new section of road through Shab Hill to the east of the existing A417. It would re-join the existing road near Cowley roundabout.
- Two new junctions: one at Shab Hill, and one on the existing A417 close to Barrow Wake, with a link road in between.
- Three lanes of carriageway going up Crickley Hill and two coming down.

- 2.1.5. Further detail and assessment of the two proposed options can be found in the consultation booklet and in the Technical Appraisal Report. Both of these can be viewed online: <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/>.

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## 3. How Highways England undertook consultation

### 3.1. Consultation timing

3.1.1. Consultation on the scheme proposals was held over a six-week period from 15 February 2018 to 29 March 2018.

### 3.2. Who was consulted

3.2.1. Highways England contacted and invited various groups to participate in the consultation so that it could understand their wide range of views on the proposals. The groups and organisations broadly fell into the following categories:

- local residents and businesses
- elected representatives
- hard-to-reach groups
- statutory bodies
- other organisations, groups and businesses
- landowners
- the wider public

#### **Local residents and businesses**

3.2.2. Letters were sent to residents living within the area of the two route options being considered to inform them that the consultation was taking place, promote the public events and provide information on how they could submit feedback.

3.2.3. In addition, the consultation was widely promoted using a range of other channels, including leaflets, an animated video, regional press and social media. More details are given in section 3.3.

#### **Elected representatives**

3.2.4. Elected representatives whose constituents live or work in the vicinity of the options were contacted to inform them of the start of the consultation, promote the public events and invite them to attend a preview event on 14 February 2018. Details of the elected representatives contacted can be found in Appendix A.

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## Hard-to-reach groups

3.2.5. Hard-to-reach groups can be broadly defined as those that may have specific requirements to access consultation information or may be less likely to be involved in consultation in comparison with other local residents. It was on this basis that the hard-to-reach groups and organisations were identified. The identified groups can be broadly classified as follows:

- isolated, elderly or vulnerable communities
- economically challenged people
- time poor/busy working people
- tourists and visitors
- young people
- ethnic minorities
- people with disabilities

3.2.6. A total of 53 specific hard-to-reach groups were invited to take part in consultation, of which 11 subsequently stated that they did not want to be involved. A summary of the hard-to-reach groups contacted can be found in Appendix B.

3.2.7. In order that all hard-to-reach groups and individuals were aware of the consultation and able to take part, Highways England undertook the following activities to encourage their involvement:

- all information was written in plain English
- all meetings and public events were held at times and places convenient and accessible to as many people as possible
- leaflets and posters publicising the consultation were displayed at places people naturally visit, such as libraries, cafes, pubs and supermarkets
- media releases about the consultation were issued to local and regional press
- Facebook advertising was used to promote the consultation and Twitter was used to provide key scheme updates and to encourage engagement
- paper copies of documents and information were made easily available at information points and deposit points
- although no requests were received, Highways England was prepared to provide key information documents in alternative formats on request, including large print, Braille and other languages
- hard-to-reach organisations were contacted and asked to assist in raising awareness of the consultation among their membership. Those organisations that agreed were sent a copy of the stakeholder pack and consultation materials

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## **Statutory bodies**

- 3.2.8. Although this phase of public consultation was non-statutory, all the relevant bodies who would be statutory consultees at the next stage of statutory consultation were contacted and invited to participate in the consultation.
- 3.2.9. Appendix C lists organisations which are considered to be statutory consultees under Schedule 1 of The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (the Regulations) and includes relevant parish councils affected by the proposed scheme.
- 3.2.10. In addition, neighbouring local authorities who are likely to have an interest in the scheme's development were invited to participate in the consultation, including Cheltenham Borough Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucester City Council, Herefordshire Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Swindon Borough Council, Stroud District Council and Wiltshire Council.

## **Other organisations, groups and businesses**

- 3.2.11. In addition to the consultees listed above, various other organisations were invited to take part in the consultation, including local interest groups, transport associations, business representatives and environmental groups.
- 3.2.12. A list of non-statutory organisations and groups contacted can be found in Appendix D.

## **Landowners**

- 3.2.13. As part of the consultation, all known land/property owners who have land within 150 metres of the centre lines of the proposed route options were sent information by post before the start of the consultation to inform them it was happening and to promote the public events. A total of 81 landowners were identified within this zone.
- 3.2.14. Landowners were sent a second letter as the consultation launched, which included a map of route options in relation to their land. Every landowner was also invited to book an appointment for a one-to-one meeting with Highways England to discuss the proposed route options and the consultation in more detail. These were held over a three-day period. Any affected landowners who could not attend a meeting on those days were offered separate appointments at a mutually convenient time.

### 3.3. Promoting the consultation

3.3.1. The following activities were undertaken to raise awareness of the consultation and inform people about the scheme:

- **Mailings:** Letters were sent to a range of interested parties (as outlined in the previous section of this report), including statutory consultees, members of the public, landowners, politicians, local interest groups, transport associations, business representatives and environmental groups.
- **Leaflet:** A double sided, A5 leaflet was produced to promote the consultation (see Appendix E). This was delivered to local pubs, cafes and shops to ensure the consultation reached as wide a range of people as possible (a full list of delivery points can be viewed in Appendix F). In addition, copies of the leaflet were placed in leaflet racks in Morrisons in Gloucester, Tewkesbury and Yate and Sainsbury's in Cheltenham and Gloucester.
- **Media relations:** Ahead of the launch of the consultation, Highways England issued a press release on 31 January 2018 to promote the upcoming consultation. Highways England held a media event at National Star College in Ullenwood, Gloucestershire on 14 February 2018, a day before the consultation launched. Attendees included *Gloucestershire Live (Gloucester Citizen and Gloucestershire Echo)*, *Cotswolds Journal*, BBC and ITV news and the *Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Standard*. Journalists were given a briefing on the launch of the consultation, were able to preview materials for the public event and hold one-to-one interviews with the project team. This event was supported by a media release about the consultation launching on 15 February 2018. A week before the close of the consultation, a press release was issued to remind people to have their say. The three press releases can be viewed in Appendix G.
- **Animated video:** Highways England produced an animated video to explain the need for the scheme and the challenges to finding a solution. This graphical representation was designed to make the scheme easy to understand and accessible for all audiences. The video is 1 minute and 56 seconds in duration and can be viewed on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/BvosDarRupA>.
- **Social media advertising:** Geo-targeted Facebook advertising was used to target those living in the vicinity of the scheme to raise awareness of the consultation and when public events were taking place, and direct people to the consultation website to find out more. Facebook adverts reached more than 106,000 people, were shared more than 125 times and commented on 115 times. Copies of the four different versions of the Facebook adverts can be seen in Appendix H.

- **Social media engagement:** Highways England used its south west Twitter account (@HighwaysSWEST) to promote the scheme and the consultation and to signpost people to the scheme website.
- **Website:** To enable people to access the full suite of consultation materials, all documents detailed in paragraph 3.4.1 were available to download from Highways England's dedicated consultation website throughout the consultation period. Gloucestershire County Council regularly updated the A417 Missing Link web page (<http://a417missinglink.co.uk/>), helping to direct people back to the main scheme page on Highways England's website.
- **Poster:** To further promote the consultation, a poster was created with details of the public consultation, the times and dates of the public events and details of where further information could be accessed. A copy of the poster can be found in Appendix I.
- **Stakeholder pack:** Highways England created a dedicated stakeholder pack designed to be a resource to help stakeholders, such as Gloucestershire County Council, to share information about the A417 Missing Link options consultation. This included copies of the poster, copy for use in newsletters, blogs or websites and social media posts. A copy of the stakeholder pack and the list of local business/organisations who received it can be found in Appendix J.

3.3.2. The use of social media was successful in widening the reach of the advertising. Notifications and comments received through these channels were noted but were not treated as consultation responses and are not included within the feedback analysis.

3.3.3. Further use of social media will be considered during the next stage of public consultation.

## 3.4. Consultation materials

3.4.1. To enable everyone to have a clear understanding of the background to the project, the options being consulted on and the way that feedback could be provided, the following documents were made available (all can be found at: <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link>):

- **Consultation booklet:** This explained the need for the scheme and its objectives, how the scheme proposals have been developed and how feedback could be provided.
- **Feedback form:** This was available in hard copy and online and was used to help collect people's views during the consultation process. The feedback form was set out as a questionnaire and enabled feedback to be provided on

the scheme's route options, as well as on the consultation process. It allowed people to make comments to support their responses. A copy of the form can be found in Appendix K.

- **Maps of Option 12 and Option 30:** These were displayed at public events, included within other materials and were also available online for those who could not attend events to view.
- **Visualisation video:** This showed a 'fly-through' of Option 12 and Option 30 to help people understand the two routes and see how they might look in the landscape. The video was available online (<https://youtu.be/Z8QhP9TxOal>) and also shown on television screens at public events.
- **Exhibition banners:** These were displayed at public events and were also available online for those who could not attend events to view. See Appendix L.
- **Technical Appraisal Report (TAR):** This provided further detail and technical information on the identification of route options and the sifting and appraisal process for determining which should be taken forward to consultation. A copy of the Technical Appraisal Report can be viewed online at: [https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/supporting\\_documents/A417%20Technical%20Appraisal%20Report.pdf](https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/supporting_documents/A417%20Technical%20Appraisal%20Report.pdf).

### 3.5. Public events, information points and deposit locations

- 3.5.1. Public events were held to give people an opportunity to view information about the scheme and speak with members of the project team, as well as to provide comments on the scheme proposals.
- 3.5.2. Printed exhibition banners and maps of route options were available to view at the consultation events and copies of the consultation booklet were available to take away. All attendees at the events were encouraged to complete and return a feedback form.
- 3.5.3. An invitation-only preview event was arranged for stakeholders with a close interest in the scheme. This was held on the evening of 14 February 2018, the day before the consultation officially launched. Invitees included councillors, parish councillors, representatives from historic/environmental groups, such as the National Trust and the Cotswolds Conservation Board, and from business groups, such as GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 3.5.4. Six public events were held at a range of times and locations to increase the number of opportunities for people to attend, including in the evening and on Saturdays. The events, detailed in Table 3.1 below, were attended by approximately 800 people in total.

Table 3.1: Public events

Date	Venue	Time
Saturday 17 February 2018	National Star College, Ullenwood, GL53 9QU	11am – 6pm
Thursday 22 February 2018	Elkstone Village Hall, Elkstone, GL53 9PB	12pm – 8pm
Friday 23 February 2018	Witcombe and Bentham Village Hall, Witcombe, GL3 4TB	11am – 6pm
Saturday 24 February 2018	St Andrew’s Church Hall, Cheltenham, GL50 1SP	11am – 6pm
Sunday 04 March 2018	GL1 Leisure Centre, Gloucester, GL1 1DT	11am – 6pm*
Thursday 08 March 2018	Henley Bank High School, Brockworth, GL3 4QF	12pm – 8pm
Tuesday 13 March 2018	Gloucester Guildhall, Gloucester, GL1 1NS	2pm – 8pm

\*This event was cancelled due to extreme weather conditions

3.5.5. The public event that was due to be held on Sunday 4 March 2018 at GL1 Leisure Centre was cancelled due to extreme weather conditions. Highways England hosted a replacement event at Gloucester Guildhall, from 2pm to 8pm on Tuesday 13 March 2018. Highways England utilised social media and the scheme website to raise awareness of the event’s cancellation and subsequent replacement.

3.5.6. Exhibition banners were displayed at each event, providing attendees with an overview of the scheme. There were 16 banners and they are included in Appendix L.

3.5.7. To ensure information was accessible to all, Highways England made available copies of all the consultation materials, including the Technical Appraisal Report and large-scale project maps, at three deposit locations in Gloucestershire, namely the civic offices of Gloucestershire County Council, Cotswold District Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council. These materials remained there throughout the duration of the consultation for people who wanted to see paper copies or who could not access the information online.

3.5.8. Highways England also set up a number of public information points where people were likely to visit. These had copies of the consultation booklet and feedback form which people could take away. Throughout the consultation period, Highways England kept in contact with each location to ensure that sufficient copies of materials were always available. There was a total of nine information points:

- Brockworth Community Library
- Cheltenham Library

- Cirencester Library
- Coleford Library
- Crickley Hill Visitor Centre
- Gloucester Library
- Hucclecote Library
- Stroud Library
- Tewkesbury Town Hall

3.5.9. The information and deposit points were publicised online and referred to in letters, leaflets, posters and social media posts.

### **Feedback mechanisms**

3.5.10. During consultation, Highways England invited feedback via a range of channels:

- By completing and handing in a feedback form at the public events, or returning them by post using the FREEPOST address, FREEPOST A417 MISSING LINK CONSULTATION.
- By completing and submitting the feedback form online via the consultation website (<https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/>).
- By downloading the feedback questionnaire on the consultation website, completing it and sending it via email to the scheme email address [A417missinglink@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A417missinglink@highwaysengland.co.uk).
- By emailing [A417missinglink@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A417missinglink@highwaysengland.co.uk).
- By sending a letter to the FREEPOST address, FREEPOST A417 MISSING LINK CONSULTATION.

## 4. Overview of consultation feedback

### 4.1. General

4.1.1. The non-statutory consultation process (as set out in Chapter 3) gave the opportunity for the public and stakeholders to provide their views on the scheme proposals, as summarised in Chapter 2. Consultees were invited to respond via a feedback form, which asked the following six questions:

1. To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?
2. Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?
3. As part of identifying route options, Highways England assessed over 30 options, including six as part of the further appraisal work. Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?
4. Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?
5. How did you hear about this consultation?
6. Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising etc?

4.1.2. This chapter is divided into sections presenting:

- the breakdown of responses
- the opinions given against Question 1 above
- themes arising from comments made against Questions 1–4 above
- the data received from responses to Questions 5 and 6 above

### 4.2. Breakdown of total responses

4.2.1. Almost 2,000 responses were received in total. A breakdown of these is shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Number of consultation responses received by format

Response format	Number of responses received
Questionnaire responses	1,913
Emails and letters	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,951</b>

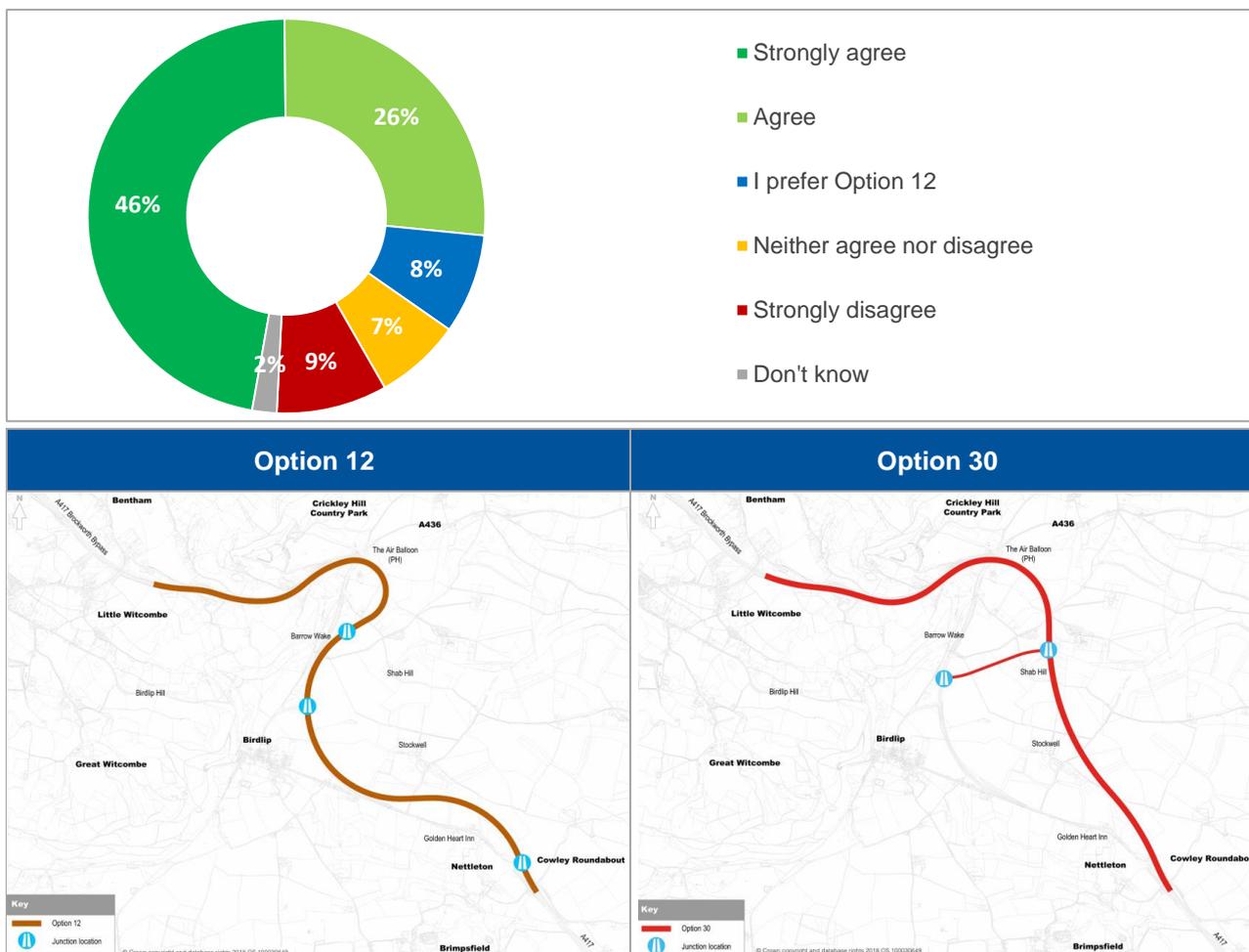
### 4.3. Questionnaire responses: Question 1

4.3.1. This section summarises the opinions expressed against Question 1 from these responses.

#### Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?

4.3.2. The response to Question 1 showed that public opinion is greatly supportive of Option 30. Of the 1,950 responses received, this question was answered by 1,907, which was almost 98% of the total. Those who identified their support for Option 30 in Question 1 amounted to 72% of all respondents, whilst 8% stated their preference for Option 12. Figure 4.1 below provides more detail.

Figure 4.1: Preferences on scheme proposals from questionnaire responses



### 4.4. Themes arising from comments made against Questions 1- 4

4.4.1. Respondents were also invited to include comments to support their opinions of the two proposed options, the discounted options and the scheme proposals in general. Analysis of the comments made against Questions 1–4 identified the following themes:

- suggestions made for alternative solutions
- impacts on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, cultural heritage, and area of special scientific interest
- temporary impacts during construction
- feedback on the non-statutory consultation process
- issues pertaining to the economic performance of the scheme
- comments about the engineering design
- environmental concerns
- land acquisition issues
- comments relating to the legacy of the scheme
- views about the need for the A417 to be improved
- issues about traffic and transport

4.4.2. The above themes have been used in Chapter 5 for the collation and organisation of all specific matters raised by the public, statutory stakeholders and non-statutory stakeholders. Highways England has provided a response to all the matters raised.

## 4.5. Feedback data from Questions 5 and 6

4.5.1. The data gained from Questions 5 and 6 is presented below:

### Question 5: How did you hear about this consultation?

4.5.2. A total of 1,509 respondents answered this question. The results showed that the promotion of the scheme and consultation reached a wide audience through a range of media. These are listed below in Figure 4.2.

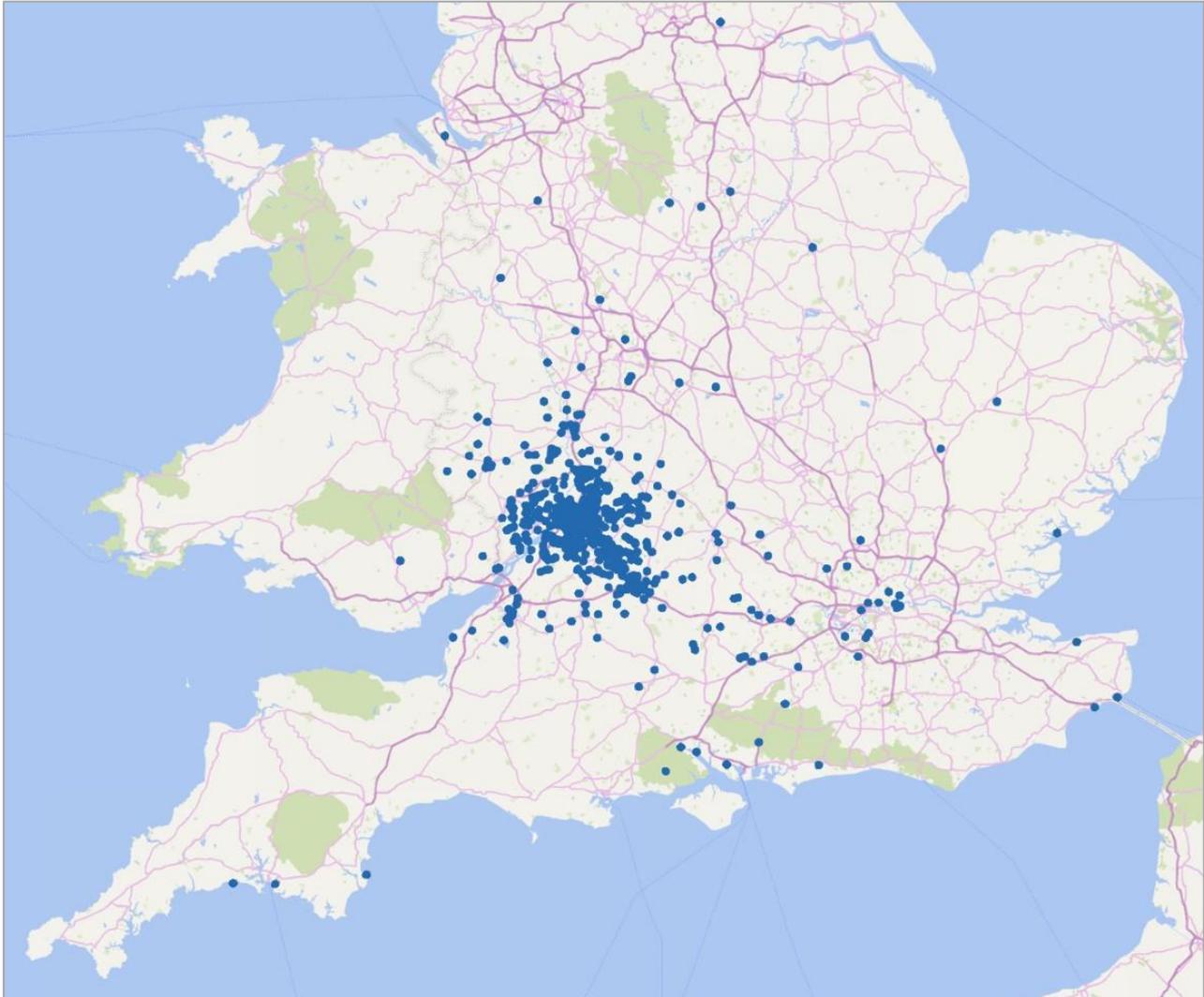
Figure 4.2: How people heard about the consultation



4.5.3. Figure 4.3 presents the distribution of responses received from across the country, of those that provided a postcode. The majority are from within a 60-minute drive of the A417, although the overall spread suggests the promotion of

the consultation through a range of traditional and modern media reached a wider geographical area.

Figure 4.3: Distribution of consultation responses



**Question 6: Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising etc?**

- 4.5.4. Comments in response to Question 6 are included in Table 6.5.
- 4.5.5. Many attending the public consultation events were complimentary about the knowledge and professional manner of the staff, along with the quality of the display material. Of the 114 people who commented on the consultation events through the online questionnaire, around 88% praised aspects of the events, while only 12% were critical.
- 4.5.6. A number of comments were received expressing concern about the consultation process, including the lack of a tunnel option in the consultation; the

level of assessment undertaken; the detail of the consultation material; the validity of the consultation; and the degree of advertisement of the process.

- 4.5.7. Overall, the consultation was successful in meeting its purpose to reach, inform and engage with a wide audience and to provide an opportunity for the public to give feedback on the options presented.

## 5. Summary of feedback on the options and key considerations

### 5.1. Summary of consultation feedback

5.1.1. All views expressed and matters raised by both the public and stakeholders have been presented in Chapter 6 with Highways England's response to each. Taking into account all comments, whether expressing support for or opposition to the scheme, three main categories emerge:

- matters that will be taken into consideration as part of the continuing development of the scheme
- matters that have informed the further appraisal and assessment of Options 12 and 30, leading to the choice of Option 30 as the preferred route
- comments about options that were considered and dismissed at earlier stages of the scheme's development, either during the appraisal of the shortlisted options or as part of the earlier options sifting process, as set out in the Technical Appraisal Report

5.1.2. The majority of the comments received about discounted route options expressed support for one or any of the shortlisted tunnel options. No considerations were raised that made a material difference to the appraisal and assessment process that had been previously undertaken to identify the options taken forward for consultation. As such, the matters raised that have informed the choice of preferred route have been the focus moving forward, and these are summarised in this chapter.

5.1.3. From the consultation responses, there was strong agreement that something needs to be done to address the issues on the A417 Missing Link, with differences of opinion on whether Option 12 or 30 would constitute the best solution. The majority of respondents were in support of Option 30 (72%), with a significantly smaller number supporting Option 12 (8%). Apart from expressions of support for the two proposed options as presented, other views were that Highways England should:

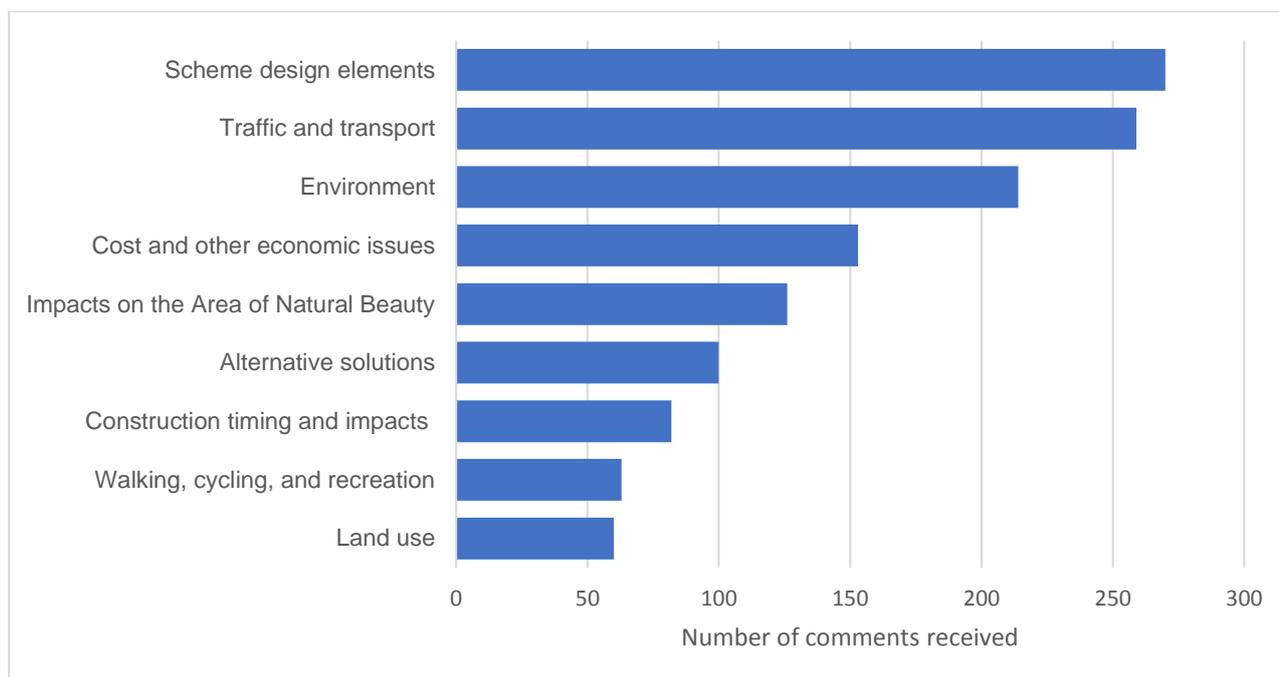
- pursue one of the shortlisted tunnel options
- modify one of the proposed options by extending the proposed cuttings or creating cut and cover tunnels in various locations
- widen the existing road to a dual carriageway, with amendments to Air Balloon roundabout
- implement other transport solutions that do not involve building a new road

5.1.4. The following sections in this chapter summarise the views that have informed the choice of Option 30 as the preferred route and will continue to do so throughout the future development of the scheme.

### Option 30

5.1.5. The first question in the response form allowed consultees to give their views on Option 30. A number of the more commonly expressed views from this question, whether positive or negative, relate to topics illustrated in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: Comment topics received for Question 1 (To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?)



5.1.6. A significant number of supportive comments were received about Option 30, with many indicating it as their preference over Option 12. This is primarily because people felt Option 30 would best deliver the scheme objective for a more free-flowing road network and that it would follow a more direct alignment. In addition, people thought Option 30 would cause less disruption during construction and provide better value for money.

5.1.7. Respondents remain concerned about the potential effects of Option 30 on the environment and the natural beauty of the area. These matters have been considered alongside the other objectives for the scheme and they will be used to inform the scheme's continuing development.

5.1.8. Environmental aspects of the design, such as the green bridge, were a popular issue for respondents, with numerous suggestions and queries received. These will all be assessed and designed in close collaboration with the relevant

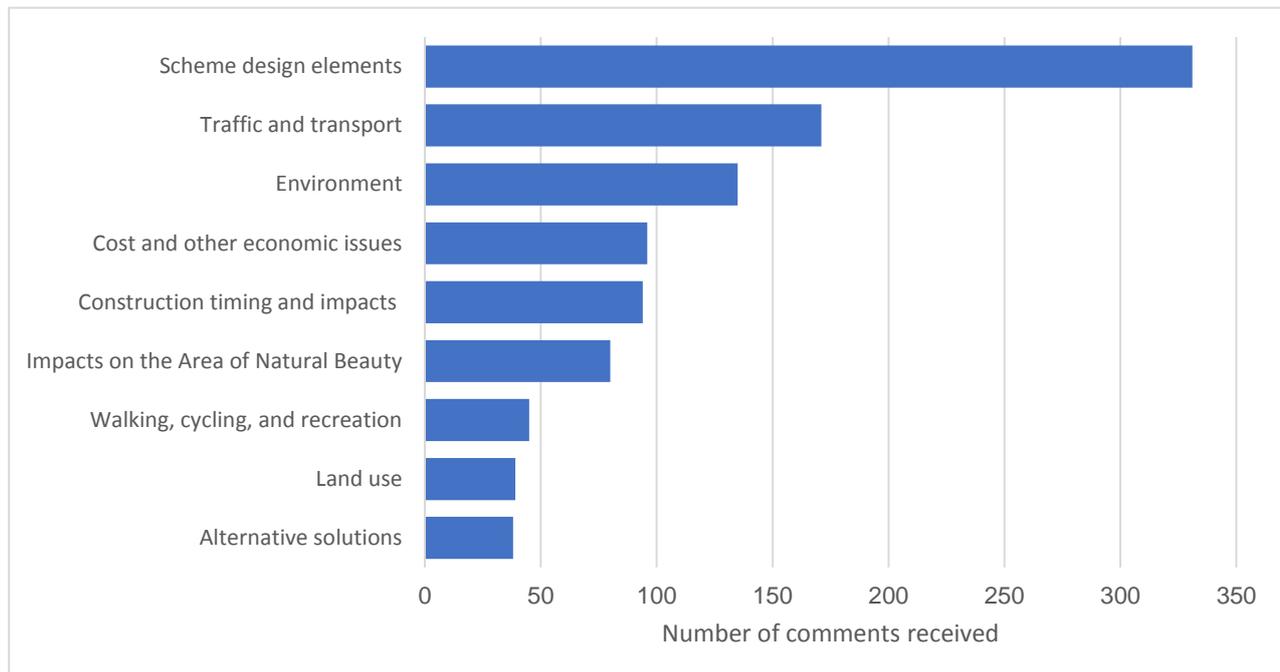
statutory bodies and in consideration of the comments raised in this consultation. Further information will be presented once additional design work has been carried out on Option 30 as part of the next stage of consultation.

- 5.1.9. The visual and audial impact of Option 30 was another matter raised by respondents. Numerous supportive comments were received about the proposal to divert the road further away from Birdlip, with many indicating that there is a problem with noise in the village from the existing road. In contrast, comments were received in opposition to the road running closer to Stockwell, Cowley, and Shab Hill.
- 5.1.10. Some comments were received relating to the layout of the junctions for Option 30, raising concerns about the accessibility of the road from some other local roads. These primarily include comments about access for A436 users and local access to the road from Cowley and Brimpsfield. These issues will be considered in future stages of the scheme's design and the feasibility of alternative junction arrangements and connections to the local road network will be assessed as part of more detailed design work. This includes a possible junction in the vicinity of the existing Cowley roundabout.
- 5.1.11. Other comments were made on the issue of rat-running, in particular through Cowley, Brimpsfield and Birdlip. Many were positive about the anticipated reduction in rat-running as a result of the scheme being progressed, while some concern remains that the issue would not lessen. These concerns will continue to be addressed in the future design of the scheme.
- 5.1.12. Provision for walkers, cyclists and horse riders was raised numerous times throughout responses to the consultation. Generally, people asked for more detail on existing public rights of way and where they would cross the proposed road. Specific concerns were raised about the Cotswold Way and the Gloucestershire Way and the retention of these routes. Highways England recognises that maintaining connectivity to and between existing rights of way is a key consideration in the continuing development of the scheme, and there are also possible opportunities for improving connectivity with the new route. Relevant details will be presented in future consultation stages once additional design work has been carried out on Option 30.
- 5.1.13. All the above matters for Question 1 were considered in the selection of the preferred route.

## **Option 12**

- 5.1.14. Comments relating to Option 12 were provided under Question 2 of the feedback form. The more commonly expressed views from this question, whether positive or negative, relate to the topics illustrated in Figure 5.2 below.

Figure 5.2: Comment topics received for Question 2 (Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?)



- 5.1.15. A large number of responses were received stating concerns about the proposed alignment of Option 12, in particular in relation to the bend in the road north of Barrow Wake and the required mandatory speed limit of 50mph along this section of the route. Many indicated that the alignment of Option 12 was too much of a compromise over Option 30.
- 5.1.16. As with Option 30, the visual and audial impacts of Option 12 were a common issue raised by respondents. The majority of comments were in objection to the road's proximity to Birdlip, on the basis that the conversion of the road into a dual carriageway would increase the noise experienced in the village. Some comments were made in support of Option 12 on the basis that the route would run further from Cowley, Stockwell and Shab Hill.
- 5.1.17. Some people indicated concern that rat-running would continue following the potential implementation of Option 12, particularly in Cowley, Brimpsfield and Birdlip. However, many comments showed that people thought Option 12 would reduce rat-running too.
- 5.1.18. Additionally, comments were received stating concern that the construction of Option 12 would have a significantly greater impact on traffic than Option 30, and that it could cause greater disruption to the local community.
- 5.1.19. Many of those who expressed a preference for Option 12 over Option 30 supported it on the basis that it follows the existing A417 and therefore potentially has a lower impact on the environment and the Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty. These views were balanced with other factors and taken into consideration in the selection of the preferred route. Despite the selection of Option 30 as the preferred route, the comments made in relation to environmental issues about Option 12 will be considered in the ongoing development of the scheme, where relevant.

- 5.1.20. Some people stated a preference for Option 30, but indicated that Option 12 was an acceptable alternative, should Option 30 not be taken forward.
- 5.1.21. The land take associated with Option 12 was raised by some people in Question 2, with the removal of the Air Balloon pub being a common concern.
- 5.1.22. As with the responses to Question 1, responses to Question 2 contained a number of comments on routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, with concerns raised on the future of existing public rights of way. Concerns raised about public rights of way will be considered in the ongoing development of the scheme, with further detail to be presented in future consultation stages.
- 5.1.23. All the above matters for Question 2 were considered in the selection of the preferred route, with Option 30 ultimately emerging as the preferred choice.

### **Other options**

- 5.1.24. Question 3 provided respondents with the opportunity to comment on other options that had been discounted by Highways England earlier in the assessment process. The most commonly expressed views in response to this question relate to the following topics:
- consideration of alternative solutions
  - costs and other economic issues
  - environment
  - scheme design elements
  - impacts on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
  - traffic and transport
  - impacts on land use
  - construction timing and impacts
  - walking, cycling and recreation

- 5.1.25. A mix of comments were received for Question 3, with nearly all respondents providing views on the previously discounted tunnel options. A number of people expressed their disappointment that one of the tunnel options was not presented during the route options consultation, with others outlining their concern that not enough assessment had been done on the feasibility of a tunnel. Other comments included people outlining their preference for a tunnel because they felt it would have a lower impact on the environment and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 5.1.26. In contrast to the responses supporting a tunnel option, a number of respondents agreed with Highways England's assessment that tunnel options were undeliverable. Many people outlined the cost implications and lower value for money as their main concerns, with length of construction and potential geological impacts also mentioned as potential issues.

## **5.2. Key considerations**

- 5.2.1. The matters raised in responses by individuals, organisations and groups, both statutory and non-statutory, have been considered alongside the results of further assessment work to inform the choice of Option 30 as the preferred route. This assessment work is set out in the Scheme Assessment Report, which can be viewed online at <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/>.
- 5.2.2. A number of matters were raised relating to design issues and other areas that do not directly impact the choice of preferred route. These may be general concerns about the impact of the scheme, or other suggestions for its development. These will be considered and addressed in the ongoing design and development of the scheme and associated mitigation measures for minimising its impact. This will take place throughout future stages of the scheme's development, with more detailed scheme proposals being presented at a further period of public consultation.

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## 6. Matters raised and Highways England response

### 6.1. General

6.1.1. This chapter presents all matters raised by the respondents to the consultation. These matters are set against the themes listed in section 4.4, tabulated alongside Highways England's response.

6.1.2. The matters raised have been sorted by the following groups:

- feedback received from all individual members of the public
- feedback received from:
  - bodies who would be statutory consultees when the scheme proceeds to the next stage of statutory consultation
  - all other organisations and groups (classed as non-statutory in this chapter)

6.1.3. Each grouping is addressed under the following sections in this chapter.

### 6.2. Matters raised by the public with Highways England's response

6.2.1. Table 6.1 to Table 6.5 present the matters raised by the public along with Highways England's response to them. These matters are tabulated against the feedback question they were submitted for in the questionnaire. Where letters and other forms of response have been submitted by individual members of the public, rather than completing the questionnaire, these have been analysed and the matters raised have been included under the relevant question. Each table categorises the matters raised under the identified themes listed in section 4.4.

Table 6.1: Matters raised by the public (Question 1 - To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?)

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Alternative proposals	A tunnel should be built instead of a surface route.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link, including tunnels. The tunnel options were assessed to offer benefits but have high costs. When the benefits were weighed against their significant cost, they did not offer value for money for taxpayers and were not taken forward to consultation. In comparison, Option 30 was assessed to have the best balance of all the key objectives of the scheme, including transport, safety, environment, heritage, community, access, and economic growth and is within the cost range for the scheme.
	A tunnel should be implemented with a toll system.	Highways England is not considering a toll system and is developing this project on the basis that it will be delivered using public funding.
	Option 30 should have more junctions, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there should be a junction with the A436 at the existing Air Balloon roundabout and the existing approach to Air Balloon roundabout could be used as a slip road onto the A436</li> <li>there should be a junction between the A417 and Bentham</li> <li>there should be a junction with the existing A417 at or near the location of the Cowley roundabout</li> </ul>	<p>The design of the scheme proposals involves the review of traffic forecasting and balancing it against the key objectives for the scheme, including the reduction in impacts on the landscape, natural and historic environment of the Cotswolds. The traffic assessment studies show that a single junction would be sufficient to manage future traffic movements between the A417 and the local road network.</p> <p>To address the specific comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a junction at Air Balloon roundabout would not be feasible as the topography is too steep, and a slip road here would not meet highways safety standards</li> <li>a junction at Bentham would be too close to the existing A417/A46 junction to achieve the appropriate distance required between junction slip roads</li> <li>further assessment will be carried out to determine whether an additional junction at the existing Cowley roundabout would offer benefits.</li> </ul>
	Option 30 shouldn't have any junctions.	At least one junction is needed along this section of the A417 to facilitate access to the local road network. Without a junction along the route of Option 30, there would be no access for vehicles travelling to or from local villages (such as Birdlip, Cowley and Coberley) and the

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		nearby A436 and B4070, which provide access to Cheltenham and Stroud.
Alternative proposals	The existing road should be widened to a dual carriageway as this would solve the problem at a significantly lower cost.	Widening the road along its existing alignment would not address the existing problems of congestion and pollution, particularly at Air Balloon roundabout. This would continue to restrict traffic flow and would not address the problems caused by the steepest sections of the road and the sharp bends.
	Option 30 should include another new road running from the proposed junction at Shab Hill to the A436 north-west of Coberley.	Highways England is committed to reviewing access to the local highway network from the strategic road network. Opportunities, including this one, to improve Option 30 to deliver greater value for money and reduce landscape and environmental impacts will be considered and presented at the statutory consultation.
	The proposed Shab Hill–Barrow Wake road link should be moved further north.	The location and the alignment of the link road will be reviewed as the route is developed. Further details of the connections to the local highway network will be presented at the statutory consultation.
	The route for Option 30 should be moved further south on Crickley Hill to avoid the Air Balloon pub.	Moving the route of Option 30 south on Crickley Hill would result in an unacceptable impact on Emma’s Grove and the Barrow Wake SSSI. There would also be additional residential properties affected by the diversion of the route south to avoid the Air Balloon pub.
	Air Balloon section of Option 30 route should be in a cut and cover tunnel. Additionally, the proposed Shab Hill–Barrow Wake link road should be removed and eastbound exit and westbound entry slip roads at Air Balloon, and eastbound entry and westbound exit slip roads at Cowley roundabout, should be added.	A cut and cover tunnel at the site of the Air Balloon pub and slip roads to the west would need a greater area of land and would have unacceptable impacts on the Crickley Hill and Emma’s Grove Scheduled Monuments, and the Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSI, both during and after construction. The topography of the area means that slip roads at Air Balloon, and eastbound entry and westbound exit slip roads at Cowley roundabout, would not meet road safety standards. The additional costs would also reduce the value for money of the scheme substantially without providing sufficient additional benefits. The junction at Shab Hill has been identified as the most suitable location in the landscape to provide the necessary local access to the strategic road network. Further assessment will be carried out to determine whether an additional junction at the existing Cowley roundabout would offer benefits.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Alternative proposals	Land bridges (cut and cover tunnels) should be included at various locations along Option 30, including Crickley Hill and Shab Hill.	A provision for building a green bridge in the vicinity of Air Balloon roundabout has been included in the cost estimate for Option 30 to improve connectivity between the habitats at the Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSI, which are currently severed by the existing A417. Additional cut and cover tunnels along the route of Option 30 would increase the project costs above the maximum cost range without offering sufficient additional benefits to be considered value for money.
	Westbound and eastbound carriageways should follow two separate routes. The westbound carriageway should follow Option 12 route and the eastbound carriageway should follow Option 3 route with a steeper gradient and shorter tunnel. Slip roads should be placed at Air Balloon roundabout and nearby Birdlip.	This would involve both surface and tunnel solutions and would be complicated to build as it would need to combine tunnelling and open carriageway construction. This complexity would increase costs which, along with the additional costs associated with tunnelling, would exceed the maximum budget set for the scheme, making it unaffordable.
	The cutting which ends at Shab Hill should continue south-east up to Cowley roundabout.	This would extend the cutting south by over two kilometres and require significant additional earthworks, for limited landscape benefit. It would increase the impact from construction and would produce a quantity of material surplus to requirements, affecting the sustainability of the project and increasing costs above the allocation for the scheme.
	The existing A417 should be removed as part of Option 30 proposals.	Under Option 30, the existing A417 would continue to provide access for neighbouring communities and would be needed to connect the new route to the A436. There is an opportunity to remove the section of the existing A417 between the B4070 junction and the Stockwell junction and this will be considered further during future stages of scheme development.
	Improvements should be made to junctions along the A417/419 route (including Highwayman, Duntisbourne and Castle Eaton junctions) as part of the scheme.	The A417 Missing Link is seeking to improve safety and reduce congestion issues along the only remaining single carriageway section of the route. Although these locations are not included within the Missing Link project, Highways England continues to review any effect on the remainder of the A417/419 route and local roads. Information is shared within Highways England and with partner organisations to ensure appropriate mitigation can be considered where necessary.
Alternative proposals	As part of the scheme, the concrete section of the A417/419 between Latton and Daglingworth should be resurfaced.	While the A417 route is likely to become busier, noise assessments do not suggest there would be a significant increase in noise along the corridor. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation. The section of A417/419 between Latton and Daglingworth will be monitored

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		as part of Highways England's ongoing road maintenance programme. The existing surface will be replaced when it is near or at the end of its life.
	The junction between the B4070 and the A417 should be assessed and safety improvements made.	Option 30 route would bypass the B4070 junction completely, reducing traffic levels in this area significantly. The existing junction would be changed to a roundabout and the roads in this area would only be used by local traffic, improving safety. The design of the junctions will be considered further as part of the next stage of the scheme's development and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	As part of the scheme improvements, Dog Lane should be reduced in width.	The local highway authority, Gloucestershire County Council, has jurisdiction of Dog Lane and is responsible for any improvements to local roads. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council to discuss any interaction between the local road network and the A417.
	A park and ride serving Cheltenham should be included in the proposals for Option 30 proposals.	The provision of a park and ride is not part of the requirements of the scheme, however any park and ride proposed by the local authority would benefit from the proposed improvements to the road network.
	A rest stop/services should be provided along the route to replace the Air Balloon pub.	There are numerous local amenities that could act as rest stops/services in place of the Air Balloon pub. These locations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Golden Heart Inn</li> <li>• The Royal George pub in Birdlip</li> <li>• The Highwayman Inn</li> <li>• the viewpoint car park at Barrow Wake</li> <li>• the café and car park on Crickley Hill</li> <li>• service station in Brockworth</li> <li>• Gloucester Business Park</li> </ul>
	A bridge should be built from the top of the escarpment (near Birdlip) down to the existing A417.	A bridge would have unacceptable impacts on the escarpment, the surrounding Cotswolds landscape and the integrity of the AONB and would not meet the project's objective to reduce the impact on the landscape.
	Road management strategies, such as smart road infrastructures, a stricter speed limit, speed cameras and flashing warning signs should be utilised as an alternative to building a new road.	As current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single carriageway and are forecast to increase, these suggestions would not address the congestion in this area and would not meet the scheme's

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		objectives to reduce delays and create a free-flowing road network along this stretch of the A417.
Alternative proposals	<p>Other more sustainable transport schemes should be developed as an alternative to road building, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvements to the local rail network, in particular the existing Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud and Swindon route and opening a station at Stonehouse</li> <li>• bus stops on the A417 to improve the routes between Cirencester and Gloucester/Cheltenham</li> <li>• improvements to walking and cycling routes along and across the A417</li> <li>• interventions targeting modal shift to public transport</li> <li>• transport and economic planning alternatives that would reduce congestion and improve safety</li> <li>• provision of other innovative solutions, such as e-bike facilities in the area</li> </ul>	<p>Developing alternative modes of transport to solve the identified capacity problem on the existing A417 Missing Link has been considered. Studies have shown a reduction of more than 15,000 person trips per day (by 2024) would be needed to solve the existing and forecast capacity problem. A package of alternative transport initiatives could potentially complement the proposed highway scheme but would not reduce demand on the existing highway sufficiently to address the problems.</p> <p>The impact of any individual intervention is limited as journey origins and destinations for users of the A417 are distributed over a wide area. As an example, any local rail improvements between Cheltenham and Swindon would only be relevant to a small fraction of existing A417 traffic. Of this small fraction of A417 traffic, not all users would be enticed onto the rail network, further limiting net traffic reductions. Improvements to alternative modes of transport would not address the existing safety concerns relating to the A417 Missing Link and could not provide an effective solution, without a fundamental overhaul of local, regional and national infrastructure with costs and scope far exceeding the proposed scheme.</p> <p>Highways England will continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and to ensure Gloucestershire County Council's public transport network is accommodated as the scheme develops.</p>
	A link for the M4 and M5 should be created further south to reduce traffic levels through Birdlip and local areas.	Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and would bypass Birdlip completely. The existing A417 in this area would only be used by local traffic, reducing traffic levels significantly.
	Remove road signage on the M4 and M5 as it encourages traffic to use the A417/419 as a short cut between the motorways.	The A417 provides an essential link between the M4 and M5, connecting Gloucestershire with markets and opportunities around the UK. The signage in place on the motorways is an important part of this, providing an alternative route as part of the management of demand on the strategic road network.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	A coordinated plan for the whole A417/419 route is needed as the current proposals would move congestion to Swindon.	The objectives of the scheme are to create a free-flowing route and improve road safety by improving the section of the A417 through the Missing Link. Any impact on other parts of the road network will be assessed in collaboration with the local highway authorities as the scheme is developed.
	Other road improvement schemes should be developed instead of the A417 project, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• upgrading the A40 single carriageway section around north and west Gloucester to a dual carriageway</li> <li>• building another bridge over the Severn nearby Westbury as this would stop Forest of Dean traffic queueing for miles at the approach to the Over roundabout</li> </ul>	The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which need upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The A417 Missing Link is part of the Road Investment Strategy, and has been identified as a priority scheme in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public services. The project is seeking to improve safety and reduce congestion issues along the only remaining single carriageway section of the A417/419 route. Other road improvement schemes fall outside the scope of this scheme. However, Highways England continually monitors opportunities to improve the strategic road network and is working with local authorities to support and facilitate improvements to the local road network and the major road network (MRN) through the new MRN programme when it is initiated in 2020/21.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Cultural Heritage and Special Scientific Interest	Concerns that Option 30 proposals would have a negative effect on the Cotswolds landscape and the rural feel of the area, including specific concerns about the visual impact the scheme would have on the escarpment, Shab Hill and Crickley Hill, and objection to the routing of the new road and associated junctions/road link through open countryside.	Highways England fully recognises the sensitive landscape of the Cotswolds and has carried out environmental assessments and studies to understand how the landscape could accommodate the proposed route options. Highways England has met with representatives from environmental groups, statutory agencies and local authorities to discuss opportunities for enhancing the landscape in this area and will continue to work closely with them to identify and include measures to reduce any adverse effects the scheme may have. Further details will be presented in future consultation stages.
	Concern that Option 30 would affect the historic and cultural significance of Crickley Hill, particularly as it is an important archaeological site.	
	Objection to Option 30 as the proposed link road between the new A417 and the existing A417 would affect heritage features around Barrow Wake which is an area where important archaeological discoveries have been made and, as such, it should be protected.	

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Concern about the impact of the route on both Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake's SSSI and RIGS status. In particular that the volume of ground to be removed for the cutting would have a considerable effect on the SSSI and would risk severing the link between the sites.	The SSSIs at Barrow Wake and Crickley Hill are currently severed by the existing A417 carriageway. As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, it is recognised that Option 30 has the potential to adversely affect Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSIs and RIGS. Highways England will continue to work closely with environmental groups, statutory agencies and local authorities to identify mitigation measures and incorporate them into future stages of the design to reduce any adverse effects.
	Concern about the effect the scheme would have on the Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods SSSI.	Option 30 is not expected to have a significant impact on the Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods SSSI, which is located around 1 km away from the proposed route. Detailed assessment will be undertaken as part of future stages of the scheme's appraisal and further details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	Concern about the impact of Option 30 proposals on Emma's Grove Scheduled Monument, including concerns that the cutting could undermine the monument if a significant rock failure occurs during or after construction.	The design of the cutting will be based on detailed geotechnical ground investigation and Historic England will be consulted as the relevant statutory body as the design for Option 30 is further developed.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Cultural Heritage and Special Scientific Interest	Objection by local residents of Stockwell, Shab Hill and Cowley to Option 30 because of the visual impact it would have on the surrounding countryside.	The alignment of Option 30 will be reviewed during the ongoing development of the scheme to improve its fit within the landscape and any mitigation measures will be considered to minimise the visual impact of the route on local residents.
	The proposals and the consultation do not recognise the commitment by the Government to protect National Parks and AONBs under the 25-year Environment Plan, or the Cotswolds Conservation Board's ambition for the Cotswolds to become the next National Park. In particular the proposals do not reflect the objectives of the scheme to be 'landscape led'.	DEFRA's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" sets out the Government's ambition to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than it was found. It is intended to be read as a statement of intent, setting the direction of travel for future government policy. Highways England works within the Government's policy framework and will take the 25 Year Plan and any subsequent new legislation or policies that arise from this plan into consideration during subsequent stages of the assessment, where appropriate. On the advice of stakeholders, including the Cotswolds Conservation Board, Highways England carried out a landscape study as part of the route options identification process. This

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		<p>study helped to inform the alignment of route options, including Option 30.</p> <p>Highways England is continuing to work with relevant stakeholders to deliver a landscape-led highways scheme which balances all of the project's key objectives. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.</p>
	Concerns that the AONB designation could need to be removed if a surface option is built as it would cause a scar on the landscape and concerns that the proposals could put the important leisure area at risk and affect the integrity of the AONB.	<p>There has been no suggestion that the Cotswolds would lose its 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' status because of the development of a surface option for improving the A417 Missing Link.</p> <p>Highways England recognises the sensitivity of the area and will work closely with the relevant statutory agencies to identify ways to reduce any impact on the AONB and the landscape.</p>
	Further landscape impact assessment work should be done, including on the future accessibility of historic sites, and information provided to the public.	Highways England will carry out further landscape impact assessment work as part of the development of the scheme's design. The accessibility of historic sites will also be addressed, and further details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	Concern that Option 30 would decimate Ullenwood on the north side of Shab Hill.	Option 30, including alternative junction and local access arrangements currently under development, will not pass through Ullenwood, or directly impact the woodland.
	Opposition to the size of the cutting at the top of Crickley Hill.	<p>The proposal for Option 30 was assessed to provide the best balance between cutting size and road gradient and would improve safety and fuel consumption along this part of the route, reducing accidents and pollution.</p> <p>Decreasing the size of the cutting at the top of Crickley Hill would increase the gradient of the road and reduce the opportunity for these benefits to be delivered. The design of the cutting will be considered further as part of the next stage in the scheme's development and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.</p>
	<p>Measures should be taken to reduce the visual impact of the scheme, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lining the new road with trees to mask the noise and visual impact</li> <li>materials sympathetic to the Cotswolds landscape should be used in construction</li> </ul>	A variety of mitigation measures will be considered to reduce the visual impact of the road during future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. These suggestions will be taken into consideration and further details will be published in future stages of consultation.

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Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Cultural Heritage and Special Scientific Interest	Support for the route of Option 30 being placed in a cutting between Air Balloon and Shab Hill.	These are some of the anticipated benefits of Option 30 and have been considered in the selection of the preferred route.
	Support for Option 30 proposals as they would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lower the visual impact on the escarpment by diverting traffic away from it</li> <li>• reduce congestion and standing traffic in the AONB</li> <li>• integrate better with the landscape of Crickley Hill</li> </ul>	
Construction	Concern about the risk of disruption and damage to the Cotswolds landscape during construction, including specific concerns about potential damage the cutting and banking work could cause.	All areas where the ground would be disturbed would be subject to extensive surveys and would be closely monitored during the construction phase of the scheme. This would ensure that any intrusive earthworks activity would not cause permanent damage to the Cotswolds landscape.
	Concern about the duration of construction and potential unforeseen delays as a result of the discovery of or damage caused to archaeological features, such as a Roman Villa.	The proposed route will be extensively surveyed before the start of work to identify any areas of potential archaeology. Highways England will work closely with the relevant statutory bodies to ensure any archaeological features are taken into account during the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. Any heritage assets would be monitored and protected during the construction work.
	The difference the proposals would make to commuting time is not worth the disruption that would occur during construction.	Upgrading this section of the A417 would improve safety, support the economy and ease congestion and pollution, making the route more convenient and reliable for all users, including commuters, as well as improving the well-being of those who live near it. Highways England will develop detailed traffic management plans in future stages of the scheme's development with the aim of minimising traffic disruption during construction.
	Concern about the disruption to traffic during construction and that more information should be published on the likely impact of the construction work on existing traffic. Specific concerns included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an increase in rat-running through Elkstone and Birdlip during construction and a suggestion that traffic management/calming measures should be installed along these routes to mitigate this</li> </ul>	Construction methods, phasing and methodology will be developed in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. Highways England will work to ensure that construction is carried out as efficiently as possible with the aim of minimising traffic disruption. All roadworks will be carefully planned and managed to ensure road safety is maintained. Rat-running through local roads is an important consideration and potential mitigation measures during construction will be considered and

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HGVs breaking down on Crickley Hill which would have a greater effect on traffic flow during construction of the scheme</li> <li>access to Crickley Hill from Gloucester would be affected while the scheme is being built</li> </ul>	discussed with the local highway authority, Gloucestershire County Council, during the ongoing development of the scheme.
Construction	Concern that the impact of the construction programme on the local environment and residents have not been considered.	The impact of the construction programme on the environment and local residents has been an important consideration in the scheme's design and assessment to date. The construction programme will be carefully planned to reduce any impact and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	Construction materials should be agreed in advance with the contractor and that care should be taken to ensure there is no deviation.	Construction materials will be considered during future stages of the scheme's design. These would form part of the contract specification for the appointed contractor and they would not be allowed to deviate from the specification without prior discussion and agreement from Highways England and other relevant bodies.
	Concern about the visual and audial impact of heavy equipment, workers' huts and piles of materials.	The movement and placement of construction machinery, site facilities and materials will be carefully planned and controlled to minimise visual and audial impact.
	Support for Option 30 on the basis that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>during construction it would cause minimal disruption to existing traffic flow</li> <li>it should be quicker to build</li> <li>it would be less disruptive to locals during construction</li> </ul>	These are anticipated benefits of Option 30 and have been considered in the selection of the preferred route. Construction methods, phasing and methodology will be developed in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. Highways England will work to ensure that construction is carried out as efficiently as possible with the aim of minimising traffic disruption.
Consultation process	Concerns that the maps and videos provided for the public consultation were not detailed enough, including suggestions that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the map should show the route of the existing A417 more clearly</li> <li>the map and video should show a compass/north point</li> <li>the map should show more landscape details and contours</li> </ul>	These comments are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next consultation stage and ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.
	An artist's impression of the road should have been provided.	
	A 'drive-through' video should have been included in addition to the 'fly-through'.	

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	The route maps and fly-through video should have been available to view in the online survey.	
Consultation process	Concern that more detail was needed on the proposals for Option 30, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air Balloon roundabout/existing A436-A417 link</li> <li>indicative layouts of the proposed junctions at Shab Hill and Barrow Wake</li> <li>more information on walking and cycling routes, in addition to bridleways</li> <li>more evaluation of the removal of the existing A417</li> </ul>	The consultation booklet provided a summary of information on the route selection process and the Technical Appraisal Report set out information on the development of the proposed route options and route selection process. The consultation was held to give the public the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposals while they were still at an early stage of development. Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and Highways England will develop the detailed design which will include these considerations. Further details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	The cost calculations for the scheme should be published.	Details of the calculations behind the commercial estimates cannot be published as they include commercially sensitive information.
	Information should have been provided in the consultation to show the locations of accidents that have taken place along the Missing Link.	Suggestions for including additional information will be taken into consideration when materials are prepared for future consultation stages.
	More information should have been provided on journey times, including travel time between Cheltenham and Swindon.	
	The other shortlisted options should have been shown in greater detail. More options, including a tunnel option, should have been included in the non-statutory consultation.	The Technical Appraisal Report presented the assessment that was undertaken on the shortlisted options prior to the consultation. Of the six options assessed, Options 12 and 30 presented the best opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and were the only two options within the allocated cost range for the scheme. It would not be appropriate to consult on other options that had been discounted.
	Concern that the consultation presented limited options and was not in line with current published Government policy as it did not recognise Highways England's duty to give great weight to the IUCN category V protected landscape status.	
	A public information campaign is needed if Option 30 is deemed to be the optimal route.	Engagement with the public will continue as the scheme progresses and Highways England will assess how best to ensure the next stage of (statutory) consultation provides information on the scheme to as many people as possible.
Consultation process	The people who would be most affected by the proposals should have the most say in the consultation and the people of Gloucestershire should directly vote on the proposals.	The consultation provided the opportunity for the public to express any views and preferences, which were taken into consideration before a decision on the preferred route was made. Highways England met with parish councils and other local stakeholder groups. The input of local people has been particularly valuable as they have been able to

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	Objection to a surface route as it would be opposed more by environmental groups which could put the scheme at risk.	<p>respond with detailed knowledge of certain issues relevant to the local area. The consultation attracted a high number of responses and the majority of comments came from stakeholders living within close proximity to the scheme. Every response has been read and the feedback has helped inform the choice of preferred route and will also inform the continued development of the scheme.</p> <p>Tunnel options would also have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape, increasing these impacts.</p> <p>Option 30 has been selected as the preferred solution for upgrading the A417 Missing Link as it was assessed to provide greater opportunities to meet the objectives for the scheme by improving safety, supporting the economy, easing congestion and pollution, making the route more convenient for its regular users, and improving the well-being of those who live near it.</p> <p>Highways England will continue to work closely with environmental groups during the ongoing development of the project.</p>
Consultation process	<p>Concern that the consultation was biased towards Option 30 and was set up to present it as the better route, and that Option 12 was included to make Option 30 look better.</p> <p>Concern that a decision has already been made.</p>	<p>The Technical Appraisal Report presented the assessment that was undertaken on the shortlisted options prior to the consultation. Options 12 and 30 were assessed and both meet the scheme's objectives and both options are within the allocated cost range for the scheme.</p> <p>The consultation material presented information on both Options 12 and 30 on an equal basis and was timed to provide the opportunity for the public to express any views and preferences before the decision on the preferred route was made. The input of local people has been particularly valuable as they have been able to respond with detailed knowledge of certain issues relevant to the local area.</p> <p>The benefits offered by Option 12 would be less than those provided by Option 30 and, over the 60-year appraisal period, they would deliver a substantially lower return on investment for taxpayers. Option 30 provides greater opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and is the only option to offer a positive return on investment for taxpayers.</p> <p>The consultation attracted a high number of respondents and every</p>

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		response has been read and the feedback helped to inform the choice of preferred route. It will also inform the continued development of the scheme.
	The consultation was unbalanced as it should have included a 'disagree' option as well.	The option to disagree with the proposals was included on the feedback forms. The consultation provided the opportunity for the public to express any views on the proposals, which were taken into consideration before a decision on the preferred route was made.
	No further consultation is needed after this one, an option should be chosen and progressed to construction as soon as possible.	Highways England recognises the need for the A417 to be improved, and every effort will be made to ensure that construction can begin as soon as possible. The timescale that has been set for the scheme reflects the further development and statutory processes, including consultation, that must be pursued before construction can start, under Planning Act 2008 requirements. More information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at <a href="https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess">https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess</a> .
Economic	Objection to the scheme proposals on the basis that it is prohibitively expensive and/or a waste of money.	<p>The strategic road network plays an important role in the national economy. An improved and efficient strategic road network maintains competitiveness and helps the economy to grow. The A417 is part of the strategic road network and, without investment in the Missing Link, the existing congestion caused by the single carriageway sections will worsen and potentially constrain economic development.</p> <p>These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution. The A417 forms a vital link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase. Unpredictable delays also mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities.</p> <p>The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The Road Investment Strategy involves investment in the strategic road network in the south west to</p>

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		boost economic growth in the region. The A417 Missing Link is part of the Road Investment Strategy, identified as a priority scheme in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public services.
	The calculated cost and return on investment (ROI) figures for Option 30 are questionable, particularly as other highways schemes (A556 link road for example) cost comparatively less.	The high cost of the proposals reflects the challenging topography of the area and the consequent difficulty of constructing a solution. The cost per mile for schemes in less challenging terrain cannot be directly compared with the A417 Missing Link.
	The cost per mile of Option 30 is questionable as it appears to be very high.	
	Concern that the return on investment for the scheme is too low for it to be progressed, and that the ROI for Option 30 would drop below one as a result of scheme modifications, mitigation measures or changing patterns of travel, such as the introduction of autonomous vehicles.	The proposed scheme provides high monetised benefits per kilometre and combined with other non-monetised considerations there is a strong strategic case for the scheme to progress. Over the 60-year appraisal period, Option 30 offers a positive return on investment and has been assessed as representing value for money for taxpayers. The benefits and costs of the scheme will continue to be assessed as the scheme is developed further.
	Concern that there is a risk of 'cost engineering' on the final designs due to the low ROI.	The scheme costs will continue to be assessed in the further stages of design development. Further details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	The options are only being assessed from a financial perspective and the cost benefit analysis undertaken does not take into account the AONB, the historical/ecological importance of the area, the environmental damage, loss of habitat or the impact on biodiversity.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the shortlisted options went through a thorough appraisal process which included a range of factors, including ability to meet the scheme's objectives, environmental and economic appraisals. Option 30 was assessed to provide the best balance of all the key objectives of the scheme, including transport, safety, environment, heritage, community, access, economic growth and value for money, and has been selected as the preferred route for the Missing Link.
Economic	Spending limit for the scheme appears to be arbitrary.	The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The A417 Missing Link has been identified as a priority for consideration and a cost allocation of £250–£500 million has been set for the scheme. The maximum limit will help ensure the project represents value for money to taxpayers.

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	<p>Investment should be prioritised on other transport projects or other public-sector areas such as education or health.</p> <p>Investment should be focused on sustainable transport schemes that would offer a better value for money, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing the public rights of way in the area</li> <li>• upgrading the A40 single carriageway section around north-west Gloucester</li> <li>• improving the existing rail route connecting Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud and Swindon (including a new rail station at Stonehouse)</li> </ul>	<p>The Government’s Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which need upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The A417 Missing Link is part of the Road Investment Strategy, and has been identified as a priority scheme in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public services.</p> <p>The project is seeking to improve safety and reduce congestion issues along the only remaining single carriageway section of the A417/419 route.</p> <p>Other road improvement schemes fall outside the scope of this scheme. However, Highways England continually monitors opportunities to improve the strategic road network and is working with local authorities to support and facilitate improvements to the local road network and the major road network (MRN) through the new MRN programme when it is initiated in 2020/21.</p> <p>Developing alternative modes of transport to solve the identified capacity problem on the existing A417 Missing Link has been considered. Studies have shown a reduction of more than 15,000 person trips per day (by 2024) would be needed to solve the existing and forecast capacity problem. A package of alternative transport initiatives could potentially complement the proposed highway scheme but would not reduce demand on the existing highway sufficiently to address the problems.</p> <p>The impact of any individual intervention is limited as journey origins and destinations for users of the A417 are distributed over a wide area. As an example, any local rail improvements between Cheltenham and Swindon would only be relevant to a small fraction of existing A417 traffic. Of this small fraction of A417 traffic, not all users would be enticed onto the rail network, further limiting net traffic reductions. Improvements to alternative modes of transport would not address the existing safety concerns relating to the A417 Missing Link and could not provide an effective solution, without a fundamental overhaul of local,</p>

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		regional and national infrastructure with costs and scope far exceeding the proposed scheme.
	<p>Concern that Option 30 would affect local businesses. Specific concerns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Golden Heart Inn, which would no longer benefit from passing trade</li> <li>• Rushwood Kennels due to the proximity of the proposed road to the business</li> <li>• Stockwell Farm as the route would split the farm into three, severely impacting access and sustainability</li> </ul>	All options considered would have adverse impacts on a number of residential and commercial properties. Highways England is in communication with local businesses and landowners affected by the scheme and will continue to engage with them as the scheme develops.
	Concern that the loss of agricultural land would lead to a long-term reduction in potential food production.	It is not anticipated that the area of agricultural land lost with the implementation of Option 30 would have a significant effect on food production.
	Objection to the construction of a tunnel on the basis that it would be too expensive and/or a waste of money. In addition, a tunnel would cost a third of the total UK annual roads budget and therefore was a non-starter.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, tunnel options are no longer under consideration. Option 30 is being taken forward as the preferred route for the A417 Missing Link.
	<p>Support for Option 30 on the basis that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it has the highest return on investment of the shortlisted options</li> <li>• the economic benefits the improvements would bring to the region</li> </ul>	These are some of the anticipated benefits of Option 30 and have been considered in the selection of the preferred route.
Engineering	Concern about the proposed gradients up Crickley Hill, in particular that the proposed reduction in gradient of 2.5% is not enough, especially for HGVs, and that the gradient would be nearly double the desirable maximum gradient for dual carriageways.	The reduction in gradient to 7.5% would be a significant improvement over the existing route. In work following the public consultation the gradient has been further reduced to 7%. The topography of Crickley Hill limits how much further the gradient could be reduced on Option 30 route and reducing it significantly further would increase the size of the cutting at the top of the hill, increasing the environmental impact and increasing costs above the maximum budget set for the scheme. Building three traffic lanes uphill (two lanes plus an additional climbing lane) would help traffic flow freely up the steep gradient, improving safety and reducing pollution.
	The gradients at Nettleton Bottom should be reduced as the existing layout is too steep.	Option 30 would not run through Nettleton Bottom and the existing layout in this location would form part of the local road network.

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Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Three lanes up Crickley Hill are not needed.	Building three lanes for uphill traffic on Crickley Hill would benefit safety and traffic flow. The arrangement would allow heavy vehicles to safely overtake one another while maintaining space for other vehicles to pass.
	Crickley Hill should have four lanes uphill.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, traffic forecasts have been prepared up to 2039, and show that the number of lanes proposed in Option 30 would be sufficient to manage future traffic flows on the A417. Providing additional lanes or space on either side of the road would be surplus to traffic requirements and would have a greater impact on the landscape and environment, increase costs and reduce the scheme's value for money.
	Space should be allowed on either side of the road for additional lanes in the future.	
	Hard shoulders should be provided on Crickley Hill for breakdowns and emergency braking.	A hard shoulder is not necessary to meet the road standard for the wider A417/A419 route. The provision of lay-bys and other safe stopping areas will be assessed during future stages of the design of the scheme.
	A physical separation or crash barrier should be installed between the opposite carriageways, particularly on Crickley Hill.	The route of Option 30 would have a central reserve area to separate the carriageways and a vehicle restraint system to act as a crash barrier.
	There should be a green central reservation in Option 30 similar to that shown in the fly-through of Option 12.	The potential for a green central reservation in Option 30 will be assessed during future stages of the design of the scheme.
Engineering	Concern about the slope stability of the cutting and that it would require continuous maintenance and could not be stabilised in a manner that is sympathetic to the local area.	Geotechnical and drainage surveys will be undertaken and considered in the future design and assessment of Option 30 to ensure all cuttings are stable and meet highways design standards and to prevent any issues caused by water run-off. More details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Concern about the geotechnical stability of the area and that there may be weak zones in the soil as a result of historical ground movements and concern that water run-off from the road could cause issues to unstable ground.	
	A speed restriction should be imposed on downhill sections, particularly as the alignment of Option 30 could encourage drivers to speed down Crickley Hill.	The speed limit for the downhill sections of Option 30 would be 70mph, in line with the rest of the route. A road safety assessment will be undertaken in the future design and assessment of the scheme to identify if any enforcement measures should be considered.
	Road lighting at junctions should be avoided but, if necessary, it should be limited as much as possible.	Road lighting will only be installed where it is necessary for safety. An assessment of any benefits of street lighting at selected junctions will take place as part of the scheme's future development, and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	Any proposed junctions in the scheme should be grade-separated.	All proposed junctions accessing/exiting the new A417 would be grade-separated with slip roads. For Option 30, this would apply to the junction

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		between the new A417 and the proposed Shab Hill–Barrow Wake link road. The B4070 junction with the existing A417 would be replaced with a roundabout to join with the link road near Barrow Wake. The design of the junctions will be considered further as part of the next stage in the scheme’s development and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	The proposed Shab Hill–Barrow Wake road and junction with the existing A417 at Barrow Wake will need to be designed to allow for the large number of HGVs that are likely to use it.	Traffic forecasts have been prepared up to 2039 and roads built as part of the scheme will be designed to accommodate future traffic flows for all vehicles, including HGVs.
	Concern that Option 30’s bend is too tight for a 70mph road and that the Shab Hill junction is too close to the bend in the road.	The design of Option 30, including the proposed bend, will safely accommodate a 70mph speed limit. The junction arrangement at Shab Hill will be developed in future stages of the design to ensure it meets road safety standards. More details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
Engineering	The road surfacing should be low-noise emission asphalt and not concrete.	Concrete surfacing has not been proposed for the route options. In new schemes, Highways England uses low-noise road surfaces wherever possible. Specific surfacing materials for Option 30 will be considered in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future consultation stages.
	Concern about safety at the junction between the A436 and Leckhampton Hill, including suggestions that a mini roundabout or traffic lights should be installed.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, this junction will continue to be developed in future stages of the design. Appropriate measures, such as signals or providing a roundabout, will be considered and agreed with Gloucestershire County Council, the highway authority responsible for this junction. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.
	Support for Option 30 on the basis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduced gradients</li> <li>• improved alignment and more direct route</li> <li>• additional lanes, particularly the provision of three lanes up Crickley Hill</li> <li>• the removal of roundabouts</li> </ul>	These are some of the anticipated benefits of Option 30 and have been considered in the choice of the preferred route.
Environment	Opposition to Option 30 as it would negatively affect local communities (including Stockwell, Cowley, Coberley and	These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution. The A417 forms a

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<p>Elkstone) and the proposals would adversely affect standard of living as a result of the noise, pollution, and hampered views.</p> <p>Objection to the proposals on the basis of the predicted increase in air pollution in Stroud, Cheltenham and Gloucester, in addition to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Opposition to the proposed link road between the new A417 and the existing A417, as it would introduce more tarmac to the area around Birdlip and (or which?) would be detrimental to the environment/local habitat.</p>	<p>vital link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase. Unpredictable delays also mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities.</p> <p>Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and the concerns raised here about air quality, environment, and habitat loss will be taken into consideration in future stages of the design. Appropriate mitigation measures will be developed in close liaison with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.</p>
	<p>Concerns that increasing traffic flow along this corridor would lead to increased levels of noise pollution, particularly along the existing concrete surfaced section of the A417/419 between Daglingworth and Latton, which should be resurfaced as the noise levels it currently generates are very high.</p>	<p>Current levels of traffic are expected to increase regardless of whether the scheme is constructed. The analysis of the scheme accepts that it would cause an increase in traffic and the impact of the scheme on related roads has been considered in its assessment. Highways England will continue to assess this in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact, where possible.</p> <p>While the A417 route is likely to become busier, noise assessments do not suggest there would be a significant increase in noise along the corridor. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.</p>
	<p>Concern about the impact of Option 30 on surrounding established woodlands, ancient/veteran trees, and any associated habitat loss, including concerns about one veteran apple tree adjacent to the Air Balloon pub, a group of mature beech trees at Shab Hill, and nearby bluebell woodland.</p>	<p>A key objective for the scheme is to reduce the impact on the landscape and the environment. The concerns raised here about effects on woodlands, habitats and wildlife will be carefully considered in the next stage of the design. Highways England will continue to work closely with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to develop appropriate mitigation measures and ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.</p>
	<p>Concern about the removal of grassland along the scheme, in particular ancient grassland in the vicinity of Shab Hill, which contains a variety of flora such as wild orchids.</p>	
	<p>Concern about the effect of the route on wildlife and biodiversity around Crickley Hill Country Park, Shab Hill and Ullenwood, and generally along the scheme. Concerns about specific species</p>	

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	include hares, deer, foxes, badgers, hedgehogs, bats, reptiles and birds.	
Environment	Any trees removed as part of the proposals should be replanted on a 1:1 basis.	<p>One of the key objectives for the scheme is to reduce the impact on the landscape and the environment. Impacts on trees and woodlands would be avoided as much as possible during the final design of the preferred route but where this is not possible, comprehensive appropriate mitigation and/or compensation will be developed. This will aim to achieve a net gain for biodiversity within the area of the scheme and would include new tree planting where appropriate.</p> <p>Highways England will continue to work closely with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to develop appropriate mitigation measures and to ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.</p>
	Concern about drainage from the scheme near Little Witcombe, as this is a low-lying area where surface run-off from the existing A417 has caused flooding in the past.	<p>Geotechnical and drainage surveys will be undertaken and considered to ensure the design of Option 30 is stable and meets highways design standards and to prevent any issues caused by water run-off. More details will be presented during the next stage of consultation.</p>
	Concern that the trebling of the road width in this area would impact on the local hydrology and hydrogeology and has the potential to destabilise the landslide deposits.	
	The existing A417 should be removed and the land returned to nature as part of the proposals.	<p>Under Option 30, the existing A417 would continue to provide access for neighbouring communities and would be needed to connect the new route to the A436. There is an opportunity to remove the section of the existing A417 between the B4070 junction and the Stockwell junction and this will be considered further during future stages of scheme development. Further information will be presented during the next stage of consultation.</p>
Concern that Option 30 would affect the quality of farmers' land in the area.	<p>It is not anticipated that Option 30 would have any effect on the quality of agricultural land in the area.</p>	

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Concern that trees would be removed along the northern side of the A417 adjacent to Dog Lane, causing an increase in noise and a lack of privacy for residents.	Based on the current alignment of Option 30, the impact on the trees adjacent to Dog Lane are anticipated to be minimal. Further design work and noise assessment will be undertaken and, should any adverse impacts on Dog Lane residents be identified, mitigation measures will be reviewed.
	Suitable fencing should run alongside the road to prevent animals from trying to cross.	This will be considered in the ongoing design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	The proposed green bridge in Option 30 should provide enough space for wildlife to feel confident and allow enough space for undergrowth to develop and should cover a greater area than outlined in the proposals.	The form, function and location of the green bridge and associated environmental mitigation will be informed by extensive assessment during the scheme's future development, to ensure that the bridge meets the objectives of the scheme to enhance the surrounding environment. Further details will be published in future stages of consultation.
Environment	Concern about the effect that weather conditions would have on the safety of the route, including concerns about fog at the top of the escarpment, and snow and ice on Crickley Hill.	One the key objectives for the scheme is to improve safety along this stretch of the A417 and adverse weather conditions, including fog, snow and ice, will be a key consideration in the development of the scheme's design.
	Concern that road lighting along the scheme including street lights, lit information boards, and signage would cause disruption to locals and wildlife and should be limited as much as possible.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, street lighting is not proposed on the mainline route of Option 30 and will only be installed where it is necessary for safety. An assessment of any benefits of street lighting at selected junctions will take place as part of the scheme's future development, and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	Support for Option 30 as it would reduce pollution in the area, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there would be less exhaust pollution in the area as the traffic would be able to move more freely</li> <li>• traffic would be routed further from Birdlip, reducing air and noise pollution experienced by the village and Birdlip School</li> </ul>	These are some of the anticipated benefits of Option 30 and have been considered in the choice of the preferred route.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>less traffic would use rat-runs which would reduce noise and air pollution through Birdlip, Brimpsfield and Elkstone</li> </ul>	
Land requirements	<p>Concern about the proposed removal of the Air Balloon pub, including that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the pub should not be removed as it is part of Gloucester's history and heritage and is popular among locals and walkers</li> <li>the removal of the pub should have formed part of the social impact assessment in the Technical Appraisal Report</li> <li>assessment should be carried out into the replacing or relocating the pub</li> </ul>	<p>All options considered would have adverse impacts on a number of residential and commercial properties. The potential demolition of the Air Balloon pub has been the subject of several assessments and appraisals and the social impact will be assessed in greater detail as part of the next stage of the design process. Highways England is in discussion with all affected landowners regarding the proposals.</p>
Land requirements	Concern about the amount of farmland and green belt land which would be taken by Option 30 and the potential impact this may have on land use.	<p>The impact of the proposals on land and property has been the subject of several assessments and appraisals and will continue to be taken into consideration in the future design and assessment of the scheme. Highways England will work with landowners and the relevant statutory authorities to ensure adverse impact is reduced and mitigation measures will be incorporated into the scheme's design as appropriate.</p>
	Objection to Option 30 on the basis that it would entail more compensation for landowners.	
	Concern that Option 30 would require some land take of the quarry near Cowley roundabout.	
	Concern about the removal of residential property as part of Option 30.	
	Concern about the land requirements for Option 30 with regard to Stockwell as the proposed route of Option 30 could isolate the village from its parish, Cowley.	<p>Maintaining connectivity and overcoming severance of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders is a key objective of the scheme and will continue to be a key consideration in the further development of the route design. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council, which is responsible for the improvement of local rights of way, to assess and agree how footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways can be maintained and to identify opportunities for improvements to routes for non-motorised users. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.</p>
Concern that Option 30 would leave a larger area of land for the expansion of Birdlip, which would harm the AONB in the long term.	<p>The key objectives for the scheme include improving access and connectivity for local communities. Any further development in the area</p>	

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		would need approval from Cotswold District Council as the local planning authority for the area.
Legacy	<p>Existing public rights of way should be maintained. Concerns that consideration has not been given to the impact of Option 30 proposals on public rights of way. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the routes of the Cotswold Way National Trail, the Gloucestershire Way, and the Gustav Holst Way, and that the existing crossing of these trails at Air Balloon roundabout is unsafe and must be improved</li> <li>the impact of the scheme on important routes used by mountain bikers, including the A436 to Barrow Wake, Star College to the radio station, Barrow Wake to the radio station, down Shab Hill from the radio station, and the road through Stockwell</li> <li>existing bridleways being put at risk by the proposals</li> </ul> <p>More dedicated provision for non-motorised users should be included in Option 30 proposals, including dedicated cycling/walking paths up to the escarpment, up and down Crickley Hill, and across the proposed route at Stockwell, Birdlip, and Cowley roundabout.</p> <p>Objection to the proposals as they would spoil the enjoyment of walkers and cyclists in the area by routing traffic closer to existing public rights of way.</p>	<p>Maintaining connectivity to and between rights of way and overcoming severance of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders is a key objective of the scheme and will continue to be a key consideration in the further development of the route design.</p> <p>Highways England's Cycling Strategy seeks to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport through the development of an integrated, comprehensive and high quality cycling network, including facilities that are safe and separate from traffic. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council, which is responsible for the improvement of local rights of way, to assess and agree how footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways can be maintained and to identify opportunities for improvements to routes for non-motorised users. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.</p>
Legacy	<p>Suggestion that the existing A417 should be converted into a dedicated walking/cycling area between the B4070 and Stockwell junctions, which could be used as a cycling proficiency area for local children.</p> <p>Concern about the safety of cyclists along the route, particularly those that travel between the A436/Leckhampton Hill and Birdlip.</p>	<p>As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report and consultation booklet, there is an opportunity under Option 30 to remove a length of the existing A417. These suggestions for the length to be converted to a dedicated walking/cycling area will be discussed with Gloucestershire County Council and considered further in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment.</p> <p>Cyclist safety is an important consideration in the continued development of the scheme, and in the development of a revised junction arrangement between Leckhampton Hill and the A436. The removal of Air Balloon junction and the reduction in traffic levels on the local road network is expected to provide safer journeys for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.</p>

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Legacy	Bridges or underpasses should be constructed to allow for all existing footpaths and bridleways that cross the A417.	Maintaining connectivity and overcoming severance of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders is a key objective of the scheme and will continue to be a key consideration in the further development of the route design. As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, a number of bridges and underpasses for use by walkers, cyclists and horse riders are proposed for Option 30. These proposals will continue to be developed and more details will be presented during future consultation stages.
	Underground crossings should be provided for bridleway crossings, and there is a great opportunity to build horse friendly crossings with Option 30.	
	The existing single-track road and green lane between Shab Hill and Ullenwood should be kept open with a crossing over/under the new road.	
	Concern that there is a risk that the Shab Hill junction would become a significant highways interchange and would attract more road building.	
	The Cotswolds stone that is salvaged from the embankment cutting should be used for new housing.	
Need	The scheme should be expedited to reduce accident frequency and delays as quickly possible. Congestion, pollution and accidents will only increase until something is done.	Highways England recognises the need for the A417 to be improved, and every effort will be made to ensure that construction can begin as soon as possible. The timescale that has been set for the scheme reflects the further development and statutory processes, including consultation, that must be pursued before construction can start, under Planning Act 2008 requirements. More information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at: <a href="https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess">https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess</a> .
	Concern that it appears to be Highways England's intention to defer a resolution to the A417 problems for as long as possible; accident rates have decreased due to slow traffic and therefore the incentives are gone.	
Need	Concerns that the scheme should not be progressed, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that it would be a waste of money</li> <li>the scheme is too expensive</li> <li>money could be better spent elsewhere, such as public transport and active travel interventions</li> <li>the proposals would increase the number of people using cars which should be discouraged, in particular Highways England should not encourage more lorries and</li> </ul>	The strategic road network plays an important role in the national economy. An improved and efficient strategic road network maintains competitiveness and helps the economy to grow. The A417 is part of the strategic road network and, without investment in the Missing Link, the existing congestion caused by the single carriageway section will worsen and potentially constrain economic development. The Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which need upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The A417 Missing Link is

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<p>commuters to use the route, and efforts should be made to reduce traffic along the route</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• other schemes should have more of a priority over the A417 (such as the A40) as the traffic on the A417 is negligible compared to other roads on the network</li> <li>• there is no need to change anything about the A417 as delays occur only twice daily and dissipate quickly. In addition, forward route planning can be used to alleviate delays</li> <li>• the scheme would be out of date when the move to autonomous vehicles takes place</li> <li>• if a tunnel is not affordable, then no improvements should take place at all</li> </ul>	<p>part of the Road Investment Strategy, and has been identified as a priority scheme in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public services. The project is seeking to improve safety and reduce congestion issues along the only remaining single carriageway section of the A417/419 route.</p> <p>Other road improvement schemes fall outside the scope of this scheme. However, Highways England continually monitors opportunities to improve the strategic road network and is working with local authorities to support and facilitate improvements to the local road network and the major road network (MRN) through the new MRN programme when it is initiated in 2020/21.</p>
Traffic and transport	<p>Opposition to the lack of a proposed junction between the A417 and the A436 at Air Balloon, specifically. Includes concerns that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• two miles would be added to the route between Gloucester and Oxford</li> <li>• this may encourage motorists to use the Birdlip Hill rat-run to travel to/from Gloucester</li> <li>• the route to/from Cheltenham is too indirect</li> </ul>	<p>The topography of the area limits the feasible engineering solutions for a junction at this location and it would not be possible to build a junction which would meet road safety and reliability requirements. However, the new road would improve journey times, reduce delays and increase reliability for traffic using the A417. This would remove any incentive for motorists to divert onto local roads and is expected to reduce congestion on the local road network.</p>
Traffic and transport	<p>The proposed Shab Hill–Barrow Wake road link is not needed as there are two clear connection points to the local network at Cowley roundabout and Air Balloon roundabout.</p>	<p>The topography of the area around Air Balloon roundabout makes it impossible to connect the new route safely to the local network at this location. Shab Hill has been identified as the most suitable location in the landscape to provide the necessary local access to the strategic road network, via the link road to Barrow Wake.</p> <p>Further assessment will be carried out to determine whether an additional junction at the existing Cowley roundabout would offer benefits.</p>
	<p>Concern about the volume of traffic that would use the proposed junctions and Shab Hill–Barrow Wake road.</p>	<p>Traffic forecasts have been prepared up to 2039, and they show the junction arrangements for Option 30 would be sufficient to manage future traffic movements between the A417 and the local network.</p>

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Concern that Option 30 proposal would worsen access to the A417 for locals, particularly for residents of Brimpsfield and Cowley, which in turn may increase pressure on minor roads.	Local access to the route will be assessed further in the future development of the scheme's design, with the objective of ensuring access for locals is maintained and pressure from rat-running reduced. A junction at Cowley roundabout will be considered as part of this.
	Concern that local roads would continue to be used as rat-runs by commuters after the proposals are built.	The reduction in rat-running through local roads is an important consideration of the scheme, and it is anticipated that Option 30 would reduce levels of rat-running traffic.
	Concern that the proposals would not stop the A435–Elkstone route from being quickest between Swindon and east Cheltenham and rat-running would continue along this route.	The location of the Missing Link in relation to east Cheltenham is such that any improvement work would be unable to eliminate rat-running along the Elkstone route completely. However, it is anticipated that Option 30 proposals would reduce rat-running through Elkstone by encouraging traffic to use the new free-flowing and safer A417.
	Concern that traffic coming from Leckhampton Hill has not been considered in the proposals.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, a traffic model was developed to assess the options for the A417 Missing Link. The model was used to forecast increases in traffic flows on the A417 and local routes, including Leckhampton Hill. Modifications to the existing A436/Leckhampton Hill junction would be needed as part of this scheme and this junction will continue to be developed in future stages of the design. Appropriate measures, such as signals or providing a roundabout, will be considered and agreed with Gloucestershire County Council, the highway authority responsible for this junction. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.
Traffic and transport	Concern that the scheme would not address or would increase the traffic issues at Air Balloon roundabout.	Option 30 proposals involve removing Air Balloon roundabout and building a continuous, uninterrupted route on the A417. This, together with a revised arrangement of the Leckhampton Hill/A436 junction, is expected to resolve the existing issues.
	Calming measures should be implemented to slow the speed of traffic on the new road.	The speed limit for the new road would be 70mph and the design of the road will safely accommodate that speed.
	HGVs should be banned from using the outside lane of the uphill carriageway.	Building three lanes for uphill traffic on Crickley Hill would benefit safety and traffic flow. The arrangement would allow heavy vehicles to overtake one another safely while maintaining space for other vehicles to pass.
	Objection to the proposals as they would increase the amount of traffic using the A417.	These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution. The A417 forms a vital link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase. Unpredictable delays also mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities.
	Concern that the proposals would increase traffic and delays at nearby junctions and roundabouts, including Seven Springs, Gloucester Business Park, Zoons Court, and the Over Roundabout.	The scheme has been, and will continue to be, developed in full collaboration with the relevant local highways authorities. The impact of the scheme on nearby junctions and city/town centres has been considered in its assessment, and will continue to be assessed in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact where possible.
	Objection to the improvements as removing the bottleneck would create a new bottleneck elsewhere. In addition, the proposals would displace the traffic to the nearby city/town centres of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud and would impose an unsustainable traffic situation for Swindon.	
	Concern about the impact of the proposals on junction 11A of the M5 and junction 15 of the M4, in particular that these junctions could experience gridlock traffic, and increasing accidents in the area.	
Traffic and transport	Concern that the removal of Severn Crossing charges would affect traffic levels along the A417.	The removal of toll charges from the two Severn crossings in 2018 has been fully accounted for in the current scheme assessment. Updated information on the assessments will be published in the Scheme Assessment Report (which can be viewed online at <a href="https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/">https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/</a> ) and more details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.
	Speed cameras should be installed on the road.	Mandatory speed cameras would be required for Option 12 on the tight bend to help manage safety. However, Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and, based on assessments to date, speed cameras would not be needed to manage safety on the route
	Buses in the area should be made more frequent and serve more areas and bus stops should be provided along and around the A417, in particular at Daglingworth roundabout, near Elkstone village and by the Golden Heart Inn.	The local bus network is operated by Gloucestershire County Council, and the improvement of bus routes (including new bus stops) falls under their jurisdiction. Highways England will work closely with the Council to ensure the scheme fits with its public and sustainable transport strategies.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Police monitored ANPR assets would be essential to reduce crime and criminality along this section of road.	The policing of the A417 and the installation of ANPR assets falls under the jurisdiction of Gloucestershire Constabulary, with which Highways England will liaise as the scheme is developed further.
	<p>Support for Option 30 on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a decrease in traffic accidents along the A417 and A436</li> <li>• the diversion of the A417 away from the existing B4070 junction, decreasing traffic flow and increasing safety at this location</li> <li>• increased traffic flow along the A417 and A436</li> <li>• the separation of traffic between Birdlip and the A436 from other traffic on the A417</li> <li>• the reduction of rat-running through Brimpsfield, Birdlip, Elkstone and Cranham</li> <li>• ambulances from the Gloucester Royal and Winfield Hospitals being able to travel through the area more quickly</li> </ul>	These are some of the anticipated benefits of Option 30 and have been considered in the selection of the preferred route.

Table 6.2: Matters raised by the public (Question 2 - Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?)

Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Alternative proposals	Option 12 should have fewer junctions as they would slow traffic and the proposed junction at Birdlip should be removed. This would improve the scheme's return on investment.	The junctions included with Option 12 were grade-separated junctions that would have had little effect on the flow of traffic. If a junction had been removed from the proposals, there would have been significant implications due to the severance of routes from the strategic road network.
	Westbound and eastbound carriageways should follow two separate routes. The westbound carriageway should follow Option 12 route and the eastbound carriageway should follow Option 3 route with a steeper gradient and shorter tunnel. Slip roads should be placed at Air Balloon roundabout and nearby Birdlip.	This was considered in the early stages of project development and rejected as it did not meet the objectives for the scheme and would cost significantly more than the options put forward for consultation.
	The existing A417 should be made into a toll road, instead of upgrading the alignment or geometry and this would also prevent the road being used as a cut through between the M4 and M5.	Highways England is developing this project on the basis that it will be delivered using public funding.
	Road management strategies, such as smart road infrastructures, a stricter speed limit, speed cameras and flashing warning signs should be used instead.	As current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase, these suggestions would not address the congestion in this area and would not meet the scheme's objectives to reduce delays and create a free-flowing road network along this stretch of the A417.
	Option 12 route should avoid Nettleton Bottom.	The proposed route for Option 12 did not run through Nettleton Bottom and the existing road layout in this location would form part of the local network.
	The existing route should be widened instead of making changes to the alignment.	Widening the road along its existing alignment would not address the existing problems of restricted traffic flow, congestion and pollution, particularly at Air Balloon roundabout and along the steepest sections of the road.
Alternative proposals	<p>Concern that investment should be prioritised for other transport or economic planning alternatives. Suggestions that other more sustainable transport schemes should be developed as an alternative to road building. Suggestions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improving the local rail network, in particular the existing Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud and Swindon route and opening a station at Stonehouse</li> </ul>	Developing alternative modes of transport to solve the identified capacity problem on the existing A417 Missing Link has been considered. Studies have shown a reduction of more than 15,000 person trips per day (by 2024) would be needed to solve the existing and forecast capacity problem. A package of alternative transport initiatives could potentially complement the proposed highway scheme but would not reduce demand on the existing highway sufficiently to address the problems. The impact of any individual intervention is limited as journey origins and destinations for users of the A417 are distributed over a wide area. As an example, any local rail improvements between Cheltenham and Swindon would only be

Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing bus stops on the A417 to improve the routes between Cirencester and Gloucester/Cheltenham</li> <li>improving walking and cycling routes along and across the A417</li> <li>interventions to target a shift to public transport</li> <li>Transport and economic planning alternatives that would reduce congestion and improve safety</li> <li>other innovative solutions such as e-bike facilities in the area</li> </ul> <p>The money should be spent building another bridge over the Severn nearby Westbury; this would stop Forest of Dean traffic queueing for miles at the approach to the Over roundabout.</p>	<p>relevant to a small fraction of existing A417 traffic. Of this small fraction of A417 traffic, not all users would be enticed onto the rail network, further limiting net traffic reductions.</p> <p>Improvements to alternative modes of transport would not address the existing safety concerns relating to the A417 Missing Link and could not provide an effective solution, without a fundamental overhaul of local, regional and national infrastructure with costs and scope far exceeding the proposed scheme.</p> <p>Highways England will continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and to ensure Gloucestershire County Council's public transport network is accommodated as the scheme develops.</p>
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	Concerns that the AONB designation could need to be removed if a surface option is built as it would cause a scar on the landscape and concerns that the proposals could put the important leisure area at risk and affect the integrity of the AONB.	<p>There has been no suggestion that the Cotswolds would lose its 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' status because of the development of a surface option for improving the A417 Missing Link.</p> <p>Highways England recognises the sensitivity of the area and will work closely with the relevant statutory agencies to identify ways to reduce any impact on the AONB and the landscape.</p>
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	The proposals and the consultation do not recognise the commitment by the Government to protect National Parks and AONBs under the 25-year Environment Plan, or the Cotswolds Conservation Board's ambition for the Cotswolds to become a National Park. In particular, the proposals do not reflect the objectives of the scheme to be 'landscape led'.	<p>DEFRA's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" sets out the Government's ambition to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than it was found. It is intended to be read as a statement of intent, setting the direction of travel for future government policy.</p> <p>Highways England works within the Government's policy framework and will take the 25 Year Plan and any subsequent new legislation or policies that arise from this plan into consideration during subsequent stages of the assessment, where appropriate.</p> <p>On the advice of stakeholders, including the Cotswolds Conservation Board, Highways England carried out a landscape study as part of the route options identification process. This study helped to inform the alignment of route options, including Option 30.</p>

Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		Highways England is continuing to work with relevant stakeholders to deliver a landscape-led highways scheme which balances all of the project's key objectives. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.
	Concerns that a surface route would significantly affect the integrity of the landscape and surrounding sites including Birdlip Peak, Barrow Wake, Emma's Grove and the Crippetts Long Barrow.	Highways England fully recognises the sensitive landscape of the Cotswolds and has carried out environmental assessments and studies to understand how the landscape could accommodate the proposed route options. Highways England has met with representatives from environmental groups, statutory agencies and local authorities to discuss opportunities for enhancing the landscape in this area and will continue to work closely with them to identify and include measures to reduce any adverse effects the scheme may have. Further details will be presented in future consultation stages.
	Concern about the visual impact of Option 12 on Crickley Hill Country Park.	
	Concern that Option 12 would further infringe on the Barrow Wake area and that the proposals would not allow it to be restored to a tranquil beauty spot. Includes comments that Barrow Wake is an SSSI and an area where important archaeological discoveries have been made and as such it should be protected.	These concerns have been noted and were taken into consideration in the selection of Option 30 as the preferred route. Option 30 is further from Barrow Wake, providing opportunities to remove existing infrastructure from the edge of the escarpment with benefits to the viewpoint, the Cotswold Way, and the Barrow Wake SSSI. While Option 12 could have provided some of these opportunities, Option 30 had clear benefits for the SSSI in particular.
	Concern about the impact of Option 12 proposals on the Emma's Grove Scheduled Monument.	Option 12 would have encircled the Scheduled Monument, severing it from its contextual landscape. Option 30 has a lesser impact as it bounds the monument to the north, and provides greater opportunities for enhancement of its value as a heritage asset. This was a factor in the selection of Option 30 as the preferred route.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	Support for Option 12 on the basis that it would have less impact on the scenery at Shab Hill and encroach less into the AONB and would give a better view of the surrounding countryside.	This was a key factor in the decision to bring Option 12 to the consultation. On balance, the opportunities afforded by Option 30 to remove existing infrastructure from the sensitive Cotswold escarpment was a factor in its selection as the preferred route. It is acknowledged that Option 30 has impacts on the landscape, and opportunities to mitigate these while enhancing its landscape benefits will be reviewed and assessed in the next stage of design where possible. Further information will be presented as part of future consultation on the scheme.
Construction	Concern that Option 12 would cause major disruption/delays to existing traffic during construction. Includes concerns that increased delays would result in an increase in local pollution.	As Option 12 would involve using a greater length of existing carriageway, it would cause greater disruption during construction than building Option 30. This was taken into consideration in the selection of Option 30 as the preferred route. The construction programme will be carefully planned to reduce any impact and Highways England will develop detailed traffic management plans with the aim of minimising traffic disruption during construction. All roadworks will be carefully
	Concern that the construction of Option 12 would encourage more drivers to use rat-runs and measures	

Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<p>should be taken to ensure traffic does not use the Elkstone rat-run during construction.</p> <p>Long distance traffic should be diverted via the M4/M5 or A34/M40 during construction of Option 12.</p> <p>If Option 12 is chosen, the construction workforce should be significantly increased and work weekends and nights to ensure completion of the scheme as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Concern that building Option 12 may take longer than the estimated 36 months programme, considering use of the existing A417 corridor and lack of capacity during peak periods. Includes concerns that Option 12 would take longer to complete than Option 30.</p> <p>Concern about an increase in accidents during the construction of Option 12.</p>	<p>planned and managed to ensure road safety is maintained. More details will be presented in future stages of consultation.</p>
Consultation process	<p>Concerns that the maps and videos provided for the public consultation were not detailed enough, including suggestions that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the map should show the route of the existing A417 more clearly</li> <li>the map and video should show a compass/north point</li> <li>the map should show more landscape details and contours</li> <li>Emma's Grove should have been included on the consultation plans</li> </ul> <p>The route maps and fly-through video should have been available to view in the online survey.</p> <p>Concerns that more detail was needed on Option 12, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air Balloon roundabout/the existing A436-A417 link</li> <li>the Cowley roundabout/existing A436-A417 link</li> </ul>	<p>These comments are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next consultation stage and ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.</p> <p>The consultation booklet provided a summary of information on the route selection process and the Technical Appraisal Report set out information on the development of the proposed route options and route selection process. The consultation was held to give the public the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposals while they were still at an early stage of development. These comments are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next consultation stage and to</p>

Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>layouts of the proposed junctions along the route</li> <li>more information on walking and cycling routes, in addition to bridleways</li> <li>impact on the local communities, in relation to traffic volume, noise pollution, etc</li> </ul>	ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.
	The people who are directly affected by the proposals should influence the choice of route.	The consultation provided the opportunity for the public to express any views and preferences, which were taken into consideration before a decision on the preferred route was made. Highways England met with parish councils and other local stakeholder groups. The input of local people has been particularly valuable as they have been able to respond with detailed knowledge of certain issues relevant to the local area. The consultation attracted a high number of responses and the majority of comments came from stakeholders living within close proximity to the scheme. Every response has been read and the feedback has helped inform the choice of preferred route and will also inform the continued development of the scheme.
	Concern that the consultation was only based on a motorist's perspective.	The scheme development is based on a set of objectives that include traffic flow and safety, as well as environment, heritage, community access and economy. The consultation provided the opportunity for the public to express any views and preferences which were taken into consideration before a decision on the preferred route was made.
Consultation process	<p>Concern that Option 12 was a token alternative considering it was previously ruled out and that it does not offer enough benefits to be presented as an alternative to Option 30 and was only included to avoid consulting on a tunnel option.</p> <p>Concerns that one of the tunnel options should have been included in the consultation.</p> <p>Option 3 should have been included instead of Option 12 as it was a better choice and had a better return on investment.</p> <p>Concern that Option 12 does not satisfy the criteria and objectives initially set for the scheme.</p> <p>Concern that the consultation presented limited options and was not in line with current published Government</p>	The Technical Appraisal Report presented the assessment that was undertaken on the shortlisted options prior to the consultation. Options 12 and 30 were assessed and both meet the scheme's objectives and both options are within the allocated cost range for the scheme. The benefits offered by Option 12 would be less than those provided by Option 30 and, over the 60-year appraisal period, they would deliver a substantially lower return on investment for taxpayers. Option 30 provides greater opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and is the only option to offer a positive return on investment for taxpayers.

Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?		
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	policy and does not recognise the requirement to give considerable weight to the IUCN category V protected landscape status.	
	The consultation was unbalanced as it should have included an opportunity to 'disagree' with the proposals.	The option to disagree with the proposals was included on the feedback forms. The consultation provided the opportunity for the public to express any views and preferences, which were taken into consideration before a decision on the preferred route was made.
Economic	Concern that the calculated cost and return on investment figures for Option 12 did not consider negative environmental impact such as habitat loss and impact on biodiversity.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the shortlisted options went through a thorough appraisal process which included a range of factors, including ability to meet the scheme's objectives, and environmental and economic appraisals. Option 30 was assessed to provide the best balance of all the key objectives of the scheme, including transport, safety, environment, heritage, community, access, economic growth and value for money, and has been selected as the preferred route for the Missing Link.
	Concern that the cost per mile of Option 12 was too high.	Option 12 had the lowest cost per mile out of the route options that were considered for this scheme. The challenging topography of the area leads to high scheme cost compared with other road schemes of a comparable length and type. When considering all the objectives for the scheme, including cost, Option 30 was assessed to provide the best balance and has been selected as the preferred route for the Missing Link.
Economic	Concern that the return on investment for Option 12 is too low and the lower cost of Option 12 doesn't make up for the lack of benefits the proposals bring.	Both Option 12 and Option 30 were recommended to be taken forward for public consultation and further development as they both offer significant improvements on the existing road and are considered affordable and deliverable. Option 12 had been subject to a large amount of assessment work historically and was able to act as a good comparator to Option 30. The benefits offered by Option 12, however, would be less than those provided by Option 30 and, over the 60-year appraisal period, they would deliver a substantially lower return on investment for taxpayers. Option 30 provides greater opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and is the only option to offer a positive return on investment for taxpayers.
	Concern that Option 12 would be a false economy and that any cost savings now would be eliminated over the longer term.	
	Concern about costs of the scheme spiralling due to unforeseen issues that may arise during detailed design/construction, as is the case with other large highways projects.	

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	Suggestion that if Option 12 is implemented, left over money should be spent on other roads.	The budget for the scheme will be allocated when the final design and costs have been fully developed, and will be agreed between the Government and Highways England. If a lower cost option is chosen, this would be reflected in the final budget allocated to the project. Following the selection of Option 30 as the preferred route, the budget will be allocated according to further design and cost assessment in future stages of the scheme's development.
	The budget for the scheme should be increased if more money is needed to provide the best solution.	The A417 Missing Link is part of the Government's Road Investment Strategy which identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The Government has set a cost allocation for this scheme of £250–£500 million in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public services. The scheme also needs to represent value for money to taxpayers. As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the options presented for consultation have been assessed to represent the best solution to deliver the scheme's key objectives within this cost allocation, including delivering value for money for taxpayers. Over the 60-year appraisal period, Option 30 provides the most opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and can be delivered within this cost allocation, offering a positive return on investment for taxpayers.
	Concern that the options presented in the consultation have been solely cost driven.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the shortlisted options went through a thorough appraisal process which included a range of factors, including ability to meet the scheme's objectives within the cost allocation for the scheme. The selection of route options put forward for consultation was made on the basis that they provided the best solutions to deliver the scheme objectives. Cost and value for money were some of the assessment criteria; others included traffic impact, road safety, environmental impact and social impact.
	Too much money is being spent on the scheme and the community would benefit more if it was spent elsewhere.	These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution. The A417 forms a vital link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase. Unpredictable delays also mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities.

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Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Economic	Concern that Option 12 would cause a significant long-term reduction in the value of property in Birdlip.	Both options are anticipated to bring benefits which are expected to have a positive impact on properties in the Birdlip area, including the reduction in rat-running through local roads and improved air quality. The preferred route for the scheme is Option 30 which would take the new A417 to the north of Birdlip, greatly reducing traffic in the area.
	Option 12 has benefits over Option 30, as it would cost less and would be better for local businesses, such as the Golden Heart Inn.	Option 12 had the lowest cost per mile out of the route options that were considered for this scheme. However, the benefits offered by Option 12 would be less than those provided by Option 30 and, over the 60-year appraisal period, they would deliver a substantially lower return on investment for taxpayers. Option 30 provides greater opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and is the only option to offer a positive return on investment for taxpayers. All options considered would have adverse impacts on a number of residential and commercial properties. The social and economic impact of the proposals on these businesses will be assessed in greater detail as part of the next stage of the design process. Highways England is in discussion with all affected landowners regarding the proposals and will continue to engage with them as the scheme develops.
Engineering	Concern about the gradients on Crickley Hill in Option 12, which are dangerous and should be reduced.	Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route for this scheme and would include a reduction in gradient to a maximum of 7%, which would be a significant improvement over the existing route.
	Concern about the bend in Option 12 route between Barrow Wake and Crickley Hill being too sharp and dangerous, particularly in combination with the steep gradients and in adverse weather conditions.	Safety assessments show that the Option 12 has a tight bend that would require a mandatory 50mph speed limit. One of the benefits of Option 30 is that the route could safely accommodate a 70mph speed limit.
	Concern about the camber of the road on Crickley Hill.	The camber of the road would be designed to meet current highway design standards.
	Concern about the slope stability of the cutting and that it would require continuous maintenance and could not be stabilised in a manner that would be sympathetic to the local area.	Geotechnical and drainage surveys will be undertaken and considered in the future design and assessment of Option 30 to ensure all cuttings are stable and meet highways design standards. More details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Objection to the 50mph speed limit along Option 12 route and suggestion that advisory/warning signs would be sufficient to ensure safety.	Safety assessments show that Option 12 has a tight bend that would require a mandatory 50mph speed limit. One of the benefits of Option 30 is that the route could safely accommodate a 70mph speed limit.

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	Speed cameras (average or fixed) should be installed along Option 12 route, particularly at Nettleton Bottom and on Crickley Hill.	Mandatory speed cameras would be required for Option 12 on the tight bend to help manage safety. However, Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and, based on assessments to date, speed cameras would not be needed to manage safety on the route.
	The proposed junctions along Option 12 route should be grade-separated.	All proposed junctions accessing/exiting the new A417 would be grade-separated with slip roads. The design of the junctions will be considered further as part of the next stage in the scheme's development and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	Concern that the higher number of junctions would increase the accident rate of the scheme, as a result of traffic having to switch lanes more often.	The design of the scheme at this stage of development has been informed by road safety and accident assessments undertaken before the consultation. All junctions will be designed to meet highways safety standards.
Engineering	Option 12 should have a central reservation to safely separate traffic.	Option 12 was designed with a central reserve and barrier between the carriageways. Option 30, which has been selected as the preferred route, would also have a central reserve and a barrier between carriageways.
	Re-using the existing route might affect the lifetime of the surface as cost savings might mean it was just patched up.	The durability of the road surface will be guaranteed by the delivery partner responsible for constructing the road. This will apply to Option 30 as the preferred route, but would have equally applied had Option 12 been selected. Highways England's aim is always that a new surface should be maintenance-free for at least five years from completion.
	Noise reducing surfacing should be used on Option 12.	Highways England uses low-noise road surfaces wherever possible. Specific surfacing materials will be considered in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future consultation stages.
	Option 12 has benefits over Option 30, including the re-use of existing infrastructure and the speed limit slowing traffic before travelling down Crickley Hill.	Option 12 does present some benefits over Option 30 as it would reduce the length of new carriageway infrastructure required, but it would remain closer to the escarpment and Birdlip village. In Highways England's assessment work, Option 30 offers the best balance of all the key objectives of the scheme, including that the design can accommodate a 70mph speed limit that would better reduce delays and improve safety along this section of the route.
Environment	Concern about the impact of Option 12 on the environment, in particular that the proposals do not fit with the Government's 25-year Environment Plan.	DEFRA's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" sets out the Government's ambition to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than it was found. It is intended to be read as a statement of intent, setting the direction of travel for future government policy. Highways England works within the Government's policy framework and will take the 25 Year Plan and any subsequent new legislation or policies that

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		<p>arise from this plan into consideration during subsequent stages of the assessment, where appropriate.</p> <p>On the advice of stakeholders, including the Cotswolds Conservation Board, Highways England carried out a landscape study as part of the route options identification process. This study helped to inform the alignment of route options, including Option 30.</p> <p>Highways England is continuing to work with relevant stakeholders to deliver a landscape-led highways scheme which balances all of the project's key objectives. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.</p>
	Concerns that the proposals would cause an increase in air pollution in Stroud, Cheltenham and Gloucester, in addition to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.	Highways England will continue to take air quality into account as it develops the design for the preferred route and appropriate mitigation will be put in place to minimise adverse impact. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.
	Concerns that increasing traffic flow along this corridor would lead to increased levels of noise pollution, particularly along the existing concrete surfaced section of the A417/419 between Daglingworth and Latton, which should be resurfaced as current the noise levels are very high.	<p>Current levels of traffic are expected to increase regardless of whether the scheme is constructed. The analysis of the scheme accepts that it would cause an increase in traffic, and the impact of the scheme on related roads has been considered in its assessment. Highways England will continue to assess this in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact, where possible.</p> <p>While the A417 route is likely to become busier, noise assessments do not suggest there would be a significant increase in noise along the corridor. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.</p>
	Concern that Option 12 would have a greater environmental impact than Option 30 due to the slower speed of traffic on the route.	The impact of traffic speeds on vehicle emissions was considered in the appraisal of the air quality effects of both options. This formed part of the overall environmental assessment of the two routes and was balanced against the other key objectives of the scheme. With Option 30's selection as the preferred route, opportunities to enhance the design to bring environmental benefits will be assessed and progressed, where possible.
	Objection to Option 12 on the basis that it would increase the noise and pollution for Birdlip residents and concerns that the proposals would increase traffic near Birdlip school.	This was one of the considerations in the selection of the preferred route. Option 30 takes traffic further from Birdlip, which would help to reduce air and noise pollution experienced by the village and Birdlip School.
	Concern about the impact of Option 12 on surrounding established woodlands and the associated habitat loss,	Impacts on trees and woodlands would be avoided as much as possible during the final design of the preferred route but where not possible, comprehensive

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	including concerns about ancient/veteran trees being affected by the proposals, and one veteran apple tree in particular, adjacent to the Air Balloon pub, and woodland near the Golden Heart Inn.	appropriate mitigation and/or compensation will be developed. A key objective for the scheme is to reduce the impact on the landscape and the environment. The concerns raised here about effects on woodlands, habitats and wildlife will be carefully considered in the next stage of the design for the preferred route. Highways England will continue to work closely with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to develop appropriate mitigation measures and ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.
	Concern that the trebling of the road width in this area would impact on the local hydrology and hydrogeology and has the potential to destabilise the landslide deposits.	A full assessment on local hydrology and hydrogeology will be carried out in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
Environment	Trees should be planted in the central reservation on Crickley Hill.	Highways England will consider these suggestions, as far as they are relevant to the scheme, as it continues the design and development of the preferred route.
	Wildlife tunnels or bridges should be installed to allow animals to cross the road.	
	Soundproofing measures should be implemented as the traffic flow along the route would increase under the proposals.	
	Screening should be implemented to prevent the view of traffic on the A417 from Elkstone; traffic is currently especially visible at night.	
	Support for Option 12 as it was felt that it would have the following benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cause less disruption to wildlife in the area</li> <li>• less exhaust pollution in the area as a result of freer moving traffic</li> <li>• run through less established woodland</li> </ul>	
Land requirements	Concerns about the Air Balloon pub, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the pub should not be removed as it is part of Gloucester's history and heritage and is popular among locals and walkers</li> </ul>	All options considered for improving this stretch of road would have adverse impacts on a number of residential and commercial properties. The potential demolition of the Air Balloon pub has been the subject of several assessments and appraisals and the social impact will be assessed in greater detail as part of the next stage of the design process. Highways England is in regular communication with all affected landowners regarding the proposals.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the removal of the pub should have formed part of the social impact assessment in the Technical Appraisal Report</li> <li>assessment should be carried out into replacing or relocating the pub</li> </ul>	
	Ullenwood Bharat cricket ground should be retained.	The proposals do not currently involve any land from the Ullenwood Bharat cricket ground. If this changes during the ongoing development of the scheme, discussion will take place with the landowners.
	Landowners affected by the works should be adequately compensated.	Highways England is in regular communication with landowners directly affected by the proposals. Landowners would be compensated fairly for the acquisition of land needed for the development of this scheme.
Land requirements	Concern that Option 12 would require some land take of the Club Zona One Trials practice quarry near Cowley roundabout.	Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route for this scheme. Impacts on the property are being assessed and discussed with relevant owners, and Highways England will work with them to reduce this as far as practicable. The includes the effect on Club Zona One.
	Option 12 would require less land purchase, particularly at Shab Hill.	This was a factor in the decision to bring Option 12 to the consultation, but, on balance, Option 30 was selected as the preferred route. The detailed alignment of the new road and area of land required will be reviewed as the route is developed. Highways England is in regular communication with landowners directly affected by the proposals. Landowners would be compensated fairly for the acquisition of land needed for the development of this scheme.
Legacy	Existing public rights of way should be maintained. Concern that consideration has not been given to the impact of Option 12 on public rights of way. Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the routes of the Cotswold Way National Trail, the Gloucestershire Way, and the Gustav Holst Way</li> <li>trails at Air Balloon roundabout are unsafe and should be improved</li> <li>bridleways in the area being affected by the proposals</li> </ul>	Maintaining connectivity to and between rights of way and overcoming severance of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders is a key objective of the scheme and will continue to be a key consideration in the further development of the route design. Highways England's Cycling Strategy seeks to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport through the development of an integrated, comprehensive and high quality cycling network, including facilities that are safe and separate from traffic. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council, which is responsible for the improvement of local rights of way, to assess and agree how footpaths and bridleways can be maintained and to identify opportunities for improvements to routes for cyclists and other non-motorised users. More details will be presented during the next stage of public consultation.
	The proposals for Option 12 should improve the local public rights-of-way.	

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	<p>Cycle tracks/lanes should be provided along or adjacent to the new sections of road.</p> <p>Concern that Option 12 would cause the A417 to become a no-go area for anyone but motorists.</p> <p>Concern that Option 12 would not provide any opportunity to hand back aspects of old infrastructure to the environment or pedestrian/cycle/horse riding paths.</p>	<p>This was one of the considerations in the selection of the preferred route. One of the benefits of Option 30 is that there is an opportunity to remove the section of the existing A417 between the B4070 junction and the Stockwell junction and this will be considered further during future stages of scheme development.</p>
Legacy	<p>Support for Option 12 as it was felt that it would have the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it appears to provide more crossing points for cyclists and pedestrians</li> <li>it has less impact on local public rights of way</li> <li>it would enable better development of sports facilities</li> </ul>	<p>Highways England's Cycling Strategy seeks to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport through the development of an integrated, comprehensive and high quality cycling network, including facilities that are safe and separate from traffic. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council, which is responsible for the improvement of local rights of way, to assess and agree how footpaths and bridleways can be maintained and to identify opportunities for improvements to routes for cyclists and other non-motorised users. More details will be presented during the next stage of public consultation.</p>
Need	<p>Option 12 was felt to be acceptable as the scheme is needed but Option 30 would be preferable.</p> <p>Concern that the scheme should be progressed more quickly to reduce accident frequency and delays as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Option 30 was assessed to be the best balance of all the key objectives of the scheme, including transport, safety, environment, heritage, community, access, and economic growth, and has been selected as the preferred route for this scheme.</p> <p>Highways England is responsible for delivering this scheme and every effort is being made to ensure that construction can begin as soon as possible. The timescale that has been set for the scheme reflects the future development and statutory processes, including consultation, that must be pursued before construction can start, under Planning Act 2008 requirements. More information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at: <a href="https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess">https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess</a>.</p>
Need	<p>Concerns that the scheme is too expensive or that the money could be better spent elsewhere, such as public transport and active travel interventions, or local economic planning alternatives. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the proposals would increase the number of people using cars, which should be discouraged, and efforts should be made to reduce traffic along the route</li> </ul>	<p>The strategic road network plays an important role in the national economy. An improved and efficient strategic road network maintains competitiveness and helps the economy to grow. The A417 is part of the strategic road network and, without investment in the Missing Link, the existing congestion caused by the single carriageway sections will worsen and potentially constrain economic development.</p> <p>The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment in the</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incidents/fatalities make up a low percentage of the total number of vehicles using the road</li> <li>if a tunnel is not affordable, then no improvements should take place at all</li> <li>removing the bottleneck at Air Balloon would displace the traffic to the nearby city/town centres of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud and elsewhere on the network</li> </ul>	<p>strategic road network in the south west to boost economic growth in the region. The A417 Missing Link is part of the Road Investment Strategy, identified as a priority scheme in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public services.</p> <p>These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution. The A417 forms a vital link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase. Unpredictable delays also mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities.</p>
Traffic and transport	Concern that the bend in the route of Option 12 combined with the 50mph speed limit would affect traffic flow, and that Option 12 would experience tailbacks during peak times.	While a mandatory 50mph speed limit would be necessary to manage safety on the tight bend in the alignment of Option 12, the capacity of this section of highway would be adequate to accommodate forecasted levels of traffic flow. As a result, spontaneous queueing at this location is not something that would be anticipated.
	Option 12 would not do enough to separate strategic and local traffic, with both having to use sections of the existing road re-used for Option 12.	The proposed scheme would cater for both local and strategic traffic movements together. It is expected to bring substantial benefits to local roads by reducing rat-running traffic that currently leaves the trunk road to avoid congestion.
	Concern that Option 12 would have less space on the A436 for traffic queues joining the A417.	Removing Air Balloon roundabout and building a continuous uninterrupted route on the A417, together with a revised arrangement of the Leckhampton Hill/A436 junction, is expected to resolve issues of queueing traffic.
	Concern that Option 12 would not eliminate the existing rat-runs through Brimpsfield, Birdlip and Elkstone and that the proposed speed limit on the route would encourage rat-running.	Reducing rat-running on local roads is one of the key objectives for the scheme and these concerns are noted. Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route for the scheme and it is expected to reduce the number of vehicles using local roads as rat-runs.
	A better connection is needed for Leckhampton and Charlton Kings to prevent rat-running through Elkstone.	The location of the Missing Link in relation to East Cheltenham is such that any improvement work would be unable to eliminate rat-running along the Elkstone route completely. However, it is anticipated that Option 30 proposals would reduce rat-running through Elkstone by encouraging traffic to use the new free-flowing and safer A417.
Traffic and transport	Option 12 does not provide a suitable connection for drivers travelling between Stroud and the A436.	Option 12 included a link road between the B4070 (Stroud) and the A436, utilising the redundant section of the former A417 at Barrow Wake. Option 30, which has been selected as the preferred route for the scheme, will also provide a new link between the two routes.

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	The existing access onto Cold Slad Lane should be addressed.	Access to Cold Slad would be maintained and, as with all other minor accesses to the existing A417, would be improved from a road safety perspective. More details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Suggestion that access at the Birdlip junction should be restricted at peak times under Option 12 proposals to prevent rat-running.	Both options are anticipated to bring benefits which are expected to have a positive impact on journeys in the Birdlip area, including the reduction in rat-running through local roads. The preferred route for the scheme is Option 30, which would take the new A417 to the north of Birdlip, greatly reducing traffic in the area.
	Suggestion that vehicles over 7.5 tons and vehicles with trailers should be banned from overtaking, due to the steeper gradients on Crickley Hill, and HGVs should be banned from using the outside lane on the uphill stretch.	Building three lanes for uphill traffic on Crickley Hill would benefit safety and traffic flow. The arrangement would allow heavy vehicles to safely overtake one another while maintaining space for other vehicles to pass.
	Concern that any improvements made to the Missing Link would lead to greater volumes of traffic using it and negate any benefits of the changes.	The road design will take into account traffic forecasting work, and assessments show that Option 30 would be sufficient to facilitate future traffic movements on the A417 and the local network. Current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase, and these improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution.
	Concern about the proposals causing increases in traffic and hence delays at nearby junctions and roundabouts, including Seven Springs, Gloucester Business Park, Zoons Court, and the Over Roundabout.	The scheme has been, and will continue to be, developed in full collaboration with the relevant local highways authorities. The impact of the scheme on nearby junctions and city/town centres has been considered in its assessment, and will continue to be assessed in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact where possible.
	Concern about the impact of the proposals on junction 11A of the M5 and junction 15 of the M4.	
	Speed cameras should be installed on the road.	Mandatory speed cameras would be required for Option 12 on the tight bend to help manage safety. However, Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and, based on assessments to date, speed cameras would not be needed to manage safety on the route.
	Suggestion to use brown signage to direct people to the Golden Heart Inn for both options.	It is recognised that the Golden Heart Inn would no longer be located alongside a trunk road as part of Option 30. This suggestion will be considered as part of future stages of the scheme's design and assessment.
Traffic and transport	Support for Option 12 as it was felt that it would have the following benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it would slow traffic speeds prior to travelling down Crickley Hill, thus improving safety</li> </ul>	These comments are noted and Option 12 does offer some benefits over Option 30. However, Option 30 was assessed to have a better balance of all the key objectives for the scheme and has been selected as the preferred route for this scheme.

**Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?**

Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• it provides better access for local residents to the route</li></ul>	

Table 6.3: Matters raised by the public (Question 3 - Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?)

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Alternative proposals	Option 3 should involve a cutting, not a tunnel.	Building Option 3 with a cutting not a tunnel would require the demolition of a number of commercial and residential properties. The cutting would need to be more than 50 metres deep in places, and would sever the Barrow Wake SSSI. This would have an unacceptable impact on the Cotswolds landscape.
	Option 3 could be combined with Option 12 or 30, and the westbound carriageway could follow Option 12/30 route and the eastbound carriageway could follow Option 3 route with a steeper gradient and shorter tunnel. Slip roads could be placed at Air Balloon roundabout and nearby Birdlip.	It is presumed that the responder has the directions of traffic incorrectly identified and that the westbound carriageway would follow Option 3 and eastbound Option 12 respectively. An arrangement that involves both surface and tunnel solutions would be complicated to build as it would need to combine tunnelling and open carriageway construction. This complexity would increase costs that, along with the additional costs associated with tunnelling, would exceed the maximum budget set for the scheme, making it unaffordable. The topography of the landscape surrounding Air Balloon roundabout means that any slip roads in this location would not meet highways safety standards and this proposal is not feasible.
	The tunnel section of Option 21 doesn't need to be as long, and the tunnel could be reduced to half a mile with embankments/cuttings for the remainder of the route.	All tunnel options would have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing roads. The existing A417 would need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape.
	Options 24 and 29 could be shorter tunnels with longer cuttings/embankments.	Reducing the length of the tunnel or altering the location would not reduce these impacts and the cost of the option would remain above the maximum cost range for the project and would not represent value for money to the taxpayer.
	Option 21 could follow a better route by running north of Stockwell.	
	An above ground route following Options 24/29 past Birdlip and Great Witcombe should have been considered.	The topography of Birdlip Hill prevents the development of a feasible surface route following Options 24 or 29. The gradient of the land along these routes reaches 15–25%, which is well above the maximum permitted for trunk roads. A surface route on Birdlip Hill would therefore require very deep cuttings (over 50m), which would have an unacceptable environmental impact, particularly as it would run through the Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods SSSIs.
	The A417 should follow the existing route but avoid Air Balloon roundabout by routing a new section of road from Grove Farm to just north of Barrow Wake.	The topography of the escarpment means this would not be feasible, as the route would require steep gradients and sharp bends. This would mean that this route

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		would fail to improve safety on this stretch of the A417 and would have a significant impact on the Barrow Wake SSSI and the view from Crickley Hill.
Alternative proposals	A surface route passing to the north of Crickley Hill (nearby Greenway Lane) should have been considered.	A surface/tunnel route running north of Crickley Hill (Option 7) was considered in Step 3 of the sifting process. As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, this was discounted as it offered fewer benefits than other options and would have a severe impact on semi-natural woodland at Ullenwood.
	The proposals should have a strong design component, for example an iconic viaduct could be built out of the escarpment with the route joining at the bottom of Crickley Hill.	This would entail costs well above the budget allocated for this scheme and would have an unacceptable impact on the escarpment, the surrounding Cotswolds landscape, and the integrity of the AONB.
	Stricter speed limit, cameras and flashing warning signs should be installed to this stretch of road instead of the proposals.	These suggestions would not remove some of the main causes of delays on the existing route and would not meet the scheme's objective of creating a free-flowing road network.
	Make improvements to the existing Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud and Swindon rail route and service as an alternative.	Developing alternative modes of transport to solve the identified capacity problem on the existing A417 Missing Link has been considered. Studies have shown a reduction of more than 15,000 person trips per day (by 2024) would be needed to solve the existing and forecast capacity problem. A package of alternative transport initiatives could potentially complement the proposed highway scheme but would not reduce demand on the existing highway sufficiently to address the problems. The impact of any individual intervention is limited as journey origins and destinations for users of the A417 are distributed over a wide area. As an example, any local rail improvements between Cheltenham and Swindon would only be relevant to a small fraction of existing A417 traffic. Of this small fraction of A417 traffic, not all users would be enticed onto the rail network, further limiting net traffic reductions. Improvements to alternative modes of transport would not address the existing safety concerns relating to the A417 Missing Link and could not provide an effective solution, without a fundamental overhaul of local, regional and national infrastructure with costs and scope far exceeding the proposed scheme. Highways England will continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and to ensure Gloucestershire County Council's public transport network is accommodated as the scheme develops.
	A link for the M4 and M5 should be created further south.	
The A417 should consist of a new route past Cranham and joining the M5 at Upton St Leonards.		

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	Tunnel portals would be unsightly to the landscape.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, tunnel options are no longer under consideration, however these matters were taken into account as part of the appraisal of the shortlisted options, prior to public consultation.
	A tunnel option would not allow road users to appreciate the Cotswolds landscape.	
	Digging of tunnels below ancient settlements founded on limestone could potentially be very destructive.	
	Objection to Option 3 as it would involve a substantial section of new road through green space.	
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	Objection to all shortlisted options except 21 on the basis that they would involve tarmacking large areas of countryside.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link. All shortlisted tunnel options would have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would also need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape, increasing these impacts. When the benefits of tunnel options were weighed against their significant cost, they did not offer value for money for taxpayers and were not taken forward to consultation.
	Support for a tunnel option in general, and specific support for Options 3 and 21, as a tunnel would be the least damaging to the AONB on visual and landscape factors.	
	A tunnel should be considered as it would have little to no impact on the AONB and the escarpment. The route chosen should reduce the impact on the countryside as much as possible.	
	The Gloucestershire landscape should be given a higher priority in the choice of a preferred route.	
Construction	Option 21 should be taken forward as it would potentially be a good opportunity to discover fossils or artefacts of interest.	The potential impact of all assessed schemes on geological or archaeological features of scientific interest was assessed prior to public consultation and taken into account in the selection of the preferred route.
	Objection to a tunnel option on the basis that the construction timetable would be extended.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, tunnel options are no longer under consideration, however these matters were taken into account as part of the appraisal of the shortlisted options, prior to public consultation.
Support for a tunnel option on the basis that it would be easier to manage during construction and have little effect on traffic.		

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	The preferred option should cause as little disruption to motorists as possible.	A full construction programme for Option 30 will be developed at a later stage in the scheme's development and Highways England will seek to minimise any disruption to motorists.
Consultation process	<p>A tunnel option should have been included in the consultation, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Option 3 should have been included in the consultation, either replacing Option 12 or in addition to it</li> <li>Option 21 should have been brought to proposal level</li> <li>Options 30, 21 and 24 should have been the options presented as part of the non-statutory consultation</li> <li>none of the tunnel options should have been rejected before the public consultation</li> <li>the public should have been allowed to choose to spend more on a tunnel option</li> </ul>	<p>As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link. All shortlisted tunnel options would have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape, increasing these impacts.</p> <p>When the benefits of tunnel options were weighed against their significant cost, they did not offer value for money for taxpayers and were not taken forward to consultation.</p>
	More detail should have been provided for the shortlisted options and the tunnel options should have been better presented, particularly in regard to environmental impact.	The consultation booklet provided a summary of information on the route selection process and the Technical Appraisal Report set out information on the development of the proposed route options and route selection process. The consultation was held to give the public the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposals while they were still at an early stage of development.
Consultation process	The information on the consultation options was difficult to find, particularly information and plans of other options.	All the consultation materials were available to view online, including the fly-through video and route maps. Comments on the consultation materials are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next stage of consultation to ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.
	The online survey should have shown maps of the options.	
	The arguments against the implementation of a tunnel option should have been better explained.	
	The other options should have been provided on a map.	The shortlisted options were shown together on a map in the consultation booklet and individually in the Technical Appraisal Report.
	The residents of Green Lane should have been made aware that Options 24 and 29 would affect their houses.	Highways England held discussions with landowners potentially affected by the two options put forward for the public consultation. Options 24 and 29 were discounted before this stage.

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Highways England has already decided to proceed with Option 30 and comments on the other options will be ignored.	<p>The Technical Appraisal Report presented the assessment that was undertaken on the shortlisted options prior to the consultation. Options 12 and 30 were assessed and both meet the scheme's objectives and both options are within the allocated cost range for the scheme. However, the benefits offered by Option 12 would be less than those provided by Option 30 and, over the 60-year appraisal period, they would deliver a substantially lower return on investment for taxpayers. Option 30 provides greater opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and is the only option to offer a positive return on investment for taxpayers.</p> <p>The consultation material presented information on both Options 12 and 30 on an equal basis and was timed to provide the opportunity for the public to express any views and preferences before the decision on the preferred route was made. The input of local people has been particularly valuable as they have been able to respond with detailed knowledge of certain issues relevant to the local area.</p> <p>The consultation attracted a high number of respondents and every response has been read and the feedback helped to inform the choice of preferred route. It will also inform the continued development of the scheme.</p>
Consultation process	Too many options have been looked at and Highways England should get on with building the scheme.	<p>It was necessary to assess a number of options to ensure the most appropriate solution that meets the objectives for the scheme was identified.</p> <p>Highways England recognises the need for the A417 to be improved, and every effort will be made to ensure that construction can begin as soon as possible. The timescale that has been set for the scheme reflects the further development and statutory processes, including consultation, that must be pursued before construction can start, under Planning Act 2008 requirements. More information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at: <a href="https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess">https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess</a>.</p>
Economic	<p>The scheme is a waste of money.</p> <p>Money for the scheme should be spent on public transport or cycling infrastructure instead and a range of transport and economic planning alternatives that aim to reduce congestion and improve road safety should be looked at.</p>	<p>The strategic road network plays an important role in the national economy. An improved and efficient strategic road network will maintain competitiveness and help the economy to grow. Without investment in the A417 Missing Link, the existing congestion on the strategic road network caused by the single carriageway sections will worsen and potentially constrain economic development.</p> <p>These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution. The A417 forms a vital link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a</p>

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		<p>single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase. Unpredictable delays also mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities.</p> <p>The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. An important part of the Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment in the south west to boost economic growth in the region. The A417 Missing Link has been identified as a priority for consideration.</p> <p>Although other transport and road improvement schemes are not included within the Missing Link project, Highways England continually monitors opportunities to improve the strategic road network and these comments are noted.</p>
	<p>The cost estimations for the tunnel options cannot be correct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the A3 Hindhead tunnel was much cheaper over the same distance. Option 21 is 4.4 times the cost of the Hindhead tunnel and this seems to be too much considering Hindhead had two lanes and was 1.2 miles</li> <li>evidence from other major tunnelling projects in the country suggest that the tunnel options could be over costed by up to 30–40%</li> </ul>	<p>The costs of building a tunnel have increased significantly due to inflation in construction costs since the opening of the Hindhead tunnel in 2011 and are projected to continue to do so to the completion of this scheme in the mid-2020s. The cost estimates for the scheme used best-practice information and methodology in line with Department for Transport guidance.</p>
	<p>Additional funding should be obtained to implement a tunnel solution, specifically that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>other schemes in the country have been allowed higher spending, such as A303 Stonehenge, HS2 and Crossrail and the A417 should be the same</li> <li>money gained after the UK leaves the EU should be used to fund a tunnel</li> </ul>	<p>The Government has set a cost allocation for this scheme. As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the options presented for consultation have been assessed to represent the best solution to deliver the scheme's key objectives within this budget, including delivering value for money for taxpayers.</p>
Economic	<p>Concern that the budget for the scheme has been set according to how much the tunnel options would cost.</p>	<p>The affordability limit was not set to exclude tunnelled solutions, but to set a reasonable upper limit to the scheme cost. As shown by the value for money figures, a scheme with a cost above this point would represent poor value for money to taxpayers.</p>

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	The Environmental Fund of £300m and Cycling, Safety, and Integration fund of £250m should be used to fund the build of a tunnel.	These funds are allocated by the Department for Transport for the entire Highways England road network over a six-year spending period, covering 2015 to 2021. The funds are available to deliver improvements through capital projects defined as being ' <i>beyond business as usual</i> ' and would not be available to fund the additional costs associated with the construction of a tunnel.
	The environmental benefits of the options should be translated into natural capital, in addition less consideration should be placed on economic factors in order to implement the best solution for the environment.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, certain environmental factors, such as air quality, noise impact and greenhouse gas emissions, are included in the return on investment calculations. Additional studies on landscape monetisation, sustainability decision modelling, opportunities mapping and landscape during option identification showed that these elements had little effect in differentiating between the six shortlisted options. In addition, there is currently no agreed Department for Transport methodology for the assessment of natural capital that could be applied as part of the cost benefit analysis for a nationally significant road scheme.
	The tunnel options may be much closer in cost once the construction and operational mitigation of the surface routes have been included in the calculations.	All routes assessed were costed using a consistent methodology including an allocation for mitigation. The construction durations for tunnelled solutions were greater (12 months or more) than surface options and the operational costs of tunnels would be far greater than those of surface solutions.
	A tunnel would be an impressive engineering feat and attract attention and tourism to the area, thus bringing benefit to the local economy.	An estimate of wider economic benefits was included in the assessment of all the options assessed but it did not make the tunnel options represent sufficient value for money to merit further consideration.
	Option 3 should have been taken forward on the basis that it had the second highest return on investment.	While Option 3 had the second highest benefit to cost ratio of the shortlisted options, it was assessed as having a poor value for money rating and would cost more than the cost range allocated for this scheme.
Economic	The reasons why Option 21 had five times the utility diversion costs of other options need to be explained.	<p>Table 7.1 within the Technical Appraisal Report contained typing errors on the values for the statutory undertakers' estimates. The correct values are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 3: £1,040,000</li> <li>• Option 12: £1,350,000</li> <li>• Option 21: £820,000</li> <li>• Option 24: £1,300,000</li> <li>• Option 29: £1,060,000</li> <li>• Option 30: £1,260,000</li> </ul> <p>This error did not affect the order of magnitude estimates in Table 7.2, the affordability assessments or the value for money assessments.</p>

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	The time period that the return on investment has been calculated over should be set out.	The economic appraisal period for the scheme options was 60 years and is set out further in the Technical Appraisal Report.
	Suggestion that any learnings from the higher 'return' values in the ROI calculations for the tunnel options should be applied to Options 12 and 30.	The higher return values in the return on investment calculations for the tunnels are largely a result of increases in economic efficiency due to the routes being more direct, which cannot be applied to other options.
	Concern that the friable nature of the limestone would cost more to line the tunnels than anticipated.	This was considered in the selection of Option 30 as the preferred route.
	A tunnel option should not be progressed as it would be prohibitively expensive and would cost a third of the total UK annual roads budget.	The Government has set a cost allocation for this scheme. As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the options presented for consultation have been assessed to represent the best solution to deliver the scheme's key objectives within this budget, including delivering value for money for taxpayers. Over the 60-year appraisal period, Option 30 provides greater opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and is the only option to offer a positive return on investment for taxpayers.
	Concern that attempting to find additional funding for tunnel options would cause the scheme to be delayed or shelved.	
Economic	A tunnel option should be preferred but as the costs are higher than the scheme budget, it should not be progressed.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link. All shortlisted tunnel options would have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape, increasing these impacts. When the benefits of tunnel options were weighed against their significant cost, they did not offer value for money for taxpayers and were not taken forward to consultation. Options 12 and 30 were identified as the options that best met the scheme's objectives, including affordability and providing value for taxpayers, with Option 30 being taken forward as the preferred route for this scheme.
Engineering	Smart road infrastructure should be installed now instead of retrofitting it in 10 years' time.	The benefits of installing 'smart' infrastructure will be considered in further stages of design and allowances may be made within the design to reduce future costs of implementation. Any installation of such infrastructure would need to be undertaken on a route-wide basis.
	Concern that the tunnel options would be a fire risk and that the gradients would cause the tunnel to act as a chimney in the case of a fire.	These matters were taken into account as part of the appraisal of the shortlisted options, prior to public consultation.
	The designs for the tunnel options should take into account the latest tunnelling techniques and the costs should be based on the latest tunnelling technology.	

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<p>The steep gradient could mean additional air processing would be required for a tunnel option.</p> <p>The likely ground conditions would mean the twin road tunnels would take too long to construct.</p> <p>Concern that the tunnel portals would square up with fault lines.</p>	
	<p>Soil from the construction/digging of a tunnel could be disposed of in the spent gravel pits between Cirencester and Fairford. Alternatively, it could be used as part of flood defences or a future tidal power generation scheme on the Severn Estuary.</p>	<p>While the tunnel options are no longer under consideration, there would be spoil from the construction of Option 30. This will be considered in further stages of design and, where possible, Highways England will reuse excess material.</p>
Engineering	<p>A tunnel option would still require a steep gradient due to the height difference from top to bottom.</p>	<p>As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the proposed maximum gradient for any of the tunnel options was 6%. This would have been a significant reduction in the existing gradient.</p>
	<p>A tunnel option should be preferred as the gradient would be lower which would cause fewer breakdowns and would be more practical for drainage.</p>	<p>As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, tunnel options are no longer under consideration, however these matters were taken into account as part of the appraisal of the shortlisted options, prior to public consultation.</p>
Environment	<p>Environment should be the primary factor in the choice of the route and should supersede cost, even if the project is delayed.</p>	<p>The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. An important part of the Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment in the south west to boost economic growth in the region, including provision for upgrading the A417 Missing Link. One of the key objectives for the scheme includes reducing the impact on the landscape and natural environment of the Cotswolds and this needs to be balanced alongside the other objectives to reduce traffic congestion, improve safety, facilitate local access, and boost economic growth.</p>
	<p>Spoil disposal should be taken into consideration, particularly spoil from constructing a tunnel as it could create environmental problems elsewhere.</p>	<p>While the tunnel options are no longer under consideration, there would be spoil from the construction of Option 30. This will be considered in further stages of design and, where possible, Highways England will reuse excess material.</p>
	<p>The tunnel options should not be progressed due to the friable rock strata in the area and the prevalence of natural springs.</p>	<p>The geology and hydrology of the area were taken into account in the assessment and consideration of the shortlisted options. A full assessment on local hydrology and hydrogeology will be considered in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.</p>
	<p>All proposals should not be progressed on the basis of the predicted increase in air pollution in Stroud district.</p>	<p>These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution. The A417 forms a vital link to the M5 at</p>

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		<p>Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase. Unpredictable delays also mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities. Highways England will continue to take air quality into account as it develops the design for the preferred route and appropriate mitigation will be put in place to minimise adverse impact. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.</p>
Environment	<p>Concerns that increasing traffic flow along this corridor would lead to increased levels of noise pollution, particularly along the existing concrete surfaced section of the A417/419 between Daglingworth and Latton, which should be resurfaced as the noise levels it currently generates are very high.</p>	<p>Current levels of traffic are expected to increase regardless of whether the scheme is constructed. The analysis of the scheme accepts that it would cause an increase in traffic, and the impact of the scheme on related roads has been considered in its assessment. Highways England will continue to assess this in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact, where possible.</p> <p>While the A417 route is likely to become busier, noise assessments do not suggest there would be a significant increase in noise along the corridor. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.</p>
	<p>Green bridges and habitat corridors should be built over/under the road.</p>	<p>A provision for building a green bridge in the vicinity of Air Balloon roundabout has been included in the cost estimate for both Option 12 and Option 30. It would improve connectivity between the habitats at the Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSI, which are currently severed by the existing A417. More details on this and other opportunities for environmental mitigation and enhancement will be presented during future stages of consultation.</p>
	<p>Trees should be planted to make up for any lost in the building of the scheme.</p>	<p>One of the key objectives for the scheme is to reduce the impact on the landscape and the environment. Impacts on trees and woodlands would be avoided as much as possible during the final design of the preferred route but where this is not possible, comprehensive appropriate mitigation and/or compensation will be developed. This will aim to achieve a net gain for biodiversity within the area of the scheme and would include new tree planting where appropriate.</p> <p>Highways England will continue to work closely with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to develop appropriate mitigation measures and ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.</p>

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	The natural springs on Crickley Hill might have an effect on planning and construction of the scheme.	The geology and hydrology of the area were taken into account in the assessment and consideration of the shortlisted options. A full assessment on local hydrology and hydrogeology will be considered in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Option 21 should be preferred as it would not have any impact on the environment.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, these options were assessed against a variety of criteria, including the objectives for the scheme. The estimated costs exceed the cost allocation for the scheme, and do not provide value for money for taxpayers' investment.  Option 30 was assessed to have the best balance of all the key objectives of the scheme, including transport, safety, environment, heritage, community, access, and economic growth and is within the cost range for the scheme.
	Option 21 would have the lowest noise footprint of the options and should be progressed.	
	An explanation is needed for why Option 21 is not viable, considering the Government's 25-year Environment Plan.	
	Option 24 should be preferred as it would take traffic noise far from Elkstone and Stockwell residents.	
	Options 24 and 29 would be far too intrusive on Great Witcombe, Witcombe and Little Witcombe.	
	Options 24 and 29 would run too close to Birdlip.	
		These concerns are noted, but Options 24 and 29 are not under consideration. Other route options presented better opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and were presented as part of the route options consultation. Option 30 has now been selected as the preferred route.
		These concerns are noted, but Options 24 and 29 are not under consideration. Other route options presented better opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and were presented as part of the route options consultation. Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and would bypass Birdlip completely. The existing A417 in this area would only be used by local traffic, reducing traffic levels significantly.
Environment	A tunnel option would be lower risk for the future of the scheme because it would please environmental groups.	Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link. All the shortlisted tunnel options would have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape, increasing these impacts. A key objective for the scheme is to reduce the impact on the landscape and the environment. The concerns raised here about effects on woodlands, habitats and wildlife will be carefully considered in the next stage of the design. Highways England will continue to work closely with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to develop appropriate mitigation measures and ensure there
	A tunnel option should be preferred for a number of reasons, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lower noise and air pollution in the area</li> <li>• less impact on local wildlife and habitats</li> <li>• would allow free migration of species across the route</li> <li>• not affected by adverse weather</li> </ul>	

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Option 3 should be preferred as it performs better on landscape-led factors (biodiversity impact, noise, pollution and enjoyment of countryside).	are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.
Land requirements	A tunnel option would have no impact on the Air Balloon pub and more farmland would be preserved.	All options considered would have adverse impacts on a number of residential and commercial properties. Highways England is in discussion with all affected landowners regarding the proposals and will continue to engage with them as the scheme develops. Option 30 was assessed to have a better balance of all the key objectives of the scheme, including transport, safety, environment, heritage, community, access, and economic growth, and has been selected as the preferred route for this scheme.
Legacy	An additional lane should be built to 'future proof' the project.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, traffic forecasts have been prepared up to 2039, and show that the number of lanes proposed in Option 30 would be sufficient to manage future traffic flows on the A417. Providing additional lanes or space on either side of the road would be surplus to traffic requirements and would have a greater impact on the landscape and environment, increase costs and reduce the scheme's value for money.
Legacy	Waste rock from building a tunnel through Cotswolds limestone would have a value as house building material and for construction of walls between fields.	This comment is noted.
	A tunnel would have little to no disruption for non-motorised users.	Building any solution, including a tunnel, would require construction of suitable crossings for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Construction methods, phasing and methodology will be developed in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment and Highways England will work to ensure that construction is carried out as efficiently as possible, with the aim of minimising disruption, including to non-motorised users.
Need	General support for the scheme and the need for improvements to be made to the missing link.	Highways England recognises the need for the A417 to be improved, and every effort will be made to ensure that construction can begin as soon as possible. The timescale that has been set for the scheme reflects the further development and statutory processes, including consultation, that must be pursued before construction can start, under Planning Act 2008 requirements.
	The scheme should be expedited to reduce accident frequency and delays as quickly possible. Congestion, pollution and accidents will only increase until something is done.	
	Concerns that the scheme should not be progressed, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that it is a waste of taxpayers' money as more road building would lead to more congestion</li> </ul>	The strategic road network plays an important role in the national economy. An improved and efficient strategic road network will maintain competitiveness and help the economy to grow. Without investment in the A417 Missing Link, the existing congestion on the strategic road network

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>money could be better spent elsewhere, such as public transport and active travel interventions, in addition to transport and economic planning alternatives. Goods should be transported by train and not by road</li> <li>that there is no need to change anything about the A417 as forward route planning by motorists could be used to alleviate delays</li> <li>removing the bottleneck at Air Balloon would transfer it elsewhere in the network</li> <li>the proposals would displace traffic to the city/town centres of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud</li> <li>that this is only a local solution and doesn't address wider issues along the A417/419 corridor such as capacity issues in Swindon</li> </ul>	<p>caused by the single carriageway sections will worsen and potentially constrain economic development.</p> <p>These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution. The A417 forms a vital link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase. Unpredictable delays also mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities.</p> <p>The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment in the strategic road network in the south west to boost economic growth in the region. The A417 Missing Link is part of the Road Investment Strategy, identified as a priority scheme in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public services. Although other transport and road improvement schemes are not included within the Missing Link project, Highways England continually monitors opportunities to improve the strategic road network and these comments are noted.</p>
Traffic and transport	<p>The tunnel options would not reduce the use of the Elkstone rat-run, particularly Option 3 which would not benefit commuters between Cheltenham and M4.</p> <p>Re-routing traffic following an accident in one of the proposed tunnel options would be difficult.</p> <p>Emergency services would require specialist training and would find it more difficult to reach accidents in a tunnel.</p> <p>Concern about access between the existing A417 and proposed route of Option 3 in the Shab Hill area.</p> <p>Option 29 would be the most direct route.</p> <p>Ways to reduce traffic volumes should be assessed and investment in alternatives such as public transport and cycling should be considered.</p>	<p>These matters were taken into account as part of the appraisal of the shortlisted options, prior to public consultation.</p> <p>Improving connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders is a key part of the scheme. Walking, cycling and horse riding routes will be considered as part of the next stage in the scheme's development and Highways England will work with</p>

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		Gloucester County Council to identify opportunities to integrate them into the design.
	Speed cameras should be installed on the road.	Mandatory speed cameras would be required for Option 12 on the tight bend to help manage safety. However, Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and, based on assessments to date, speed cameras would not be needed to manage safety on the route.
	HGVs should be limited to 50mph and banned from overtaking.	The speed limit for HGVs on dual carriageway roads is 60mph as defined by the Highway Code. Differentiating the speed limit for HGVs would be impractical on this section of the A417/419 carriageway.

Table 6.4: Matters raised by the public (Question 4 - Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?)

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Alternative proposals	Route should follow Option 30 but run west of Stockwell instead of east.	This route was considered and ruled out during the options identification process prior to the public consultation. It would involve following the route of Option 12 and the diversion of the road west of Stockwell would require a tighter curve at Air Balloon roundabout. Option 12 was presented as one of the options in this consultation.
	If Option 30 is selected, the remainder of the £500m budget should be used to roof over the cutting.	Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route for the A417 Missing Link. Adding a roof over the cutting would not provide sufficient additional benefits to justify the additional expense and would cost significantly more than any remaining budget from the maximum cost allocation for the scheme.
	Proposal for an 'Option 31'; the route should follow Option 12 but could remove the Barrow Wake junction and include a large roundabout extending over the proposed A417 cutting near the existing Air Balloon roundabout. This would provide straight through routes for all the cross directions of travel through the provision of slip roads to the new A417.	This proposal would have an unacceptable impact on two Scheduled Monuments, Emma's Grove and Crickley Hill, and would not deliver the scheme objectives. The gradient of slip roads between the new A417 and the location of Air Balloon roundabout would be too steep and would cause other significant road safety issues.
	Maintain the existing arrangement at Air Balloon roundabout and install free-flowing slip roads connecting the sections of A417 west and south of Air Balloon roundabout. These proposed slip roads would be limited to use by cars only; HGVs and other larger vehicles would use the roundabout.	This proposal is similar to discounted options set out in the Technical Appraisal Report. These were rejected because the gradient and bends needed for these solutions to work would not meet safety standards. In addition, limiting access for HGVs and the impact the eastbound slip road would have on the Emma's Grove Scheduled Monument mean this option would not deliver the scheme objectives.
	Option 3 should have a road linking the new A417 and the existing A417 between Barrow Wake and Shab Hill (as in Option 30), and then the proposed grade-separated junctions could be removed from the proposal, reducing the cost.	This would increase the cost of Option 3, as it would still involve the construction of one grade-separated junction and an 860-metre-long section of road from Shab Hill to Barrow Wake. This proposal would not be deliverable within the cost allocation for the scheme.
	A tunnel should be implemented with a toll system.	Highways England is not considering a toll system and is developing this project on the basis that it will be delivered using public funding.
Alternative proposals	The existing route of the A417, or part of the route between Air Balloon roundabout and Cowley roundabout, should be widened to a dual carriageway as a cheaper alternative.	Widening the road along its existing alignment would not address the existing problems of restricted traffic flow, congestion and pollution, particularly at Air Balloon roundabout and along the steepest sections of the road.

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Westbound and eastbound carriageways should follow two separate routes. The westbound carriageway should follow Option 12 and the eastbound carriageway should follow Option 3.	This was considered in the early stages of project development and rejected as it did not meet the objectives for the scheme and would cost significantly more than the options put forward for consultation.
	Use the existing A417 as the westbound route to save costs and space.	This suggestion would not meet the objectives set for the scheme as Air Balloon roundabout would continue to be a bottleneck for traffic.
	A new road should be built running through the escarpment with a cutting; connection to the local network would be via a junction at Shab Hill.	This alternative proposal is similar to options 13 and 14, which were assessed during the options identification process. As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, these routes were discounted as they would not deliver the scheme's environmental and landscape objectives.
	Build a bridge from the top of the escarpment down to the A417 below.	A bridge would have unacceptable impacts on the escarpment, the surrounding Cotswolds landscape and the integrity of the AONB and would not meet the project's objective to reduce the impact on the landscape.
	Improvements should be made to A436 as part of the scheme, including widening between Andoversford and Air Balloon to cope with additional traffic volumes, and resurfacing.	The local highway authority, Gloucestershire County Council, has jurisdiction over the A436 and is responsible for any improvements to local roads. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council to discuss any interaction and impact on the local road network and the A417.
	Allow access between the new route and the A436 at Air Balloon roundabout.	A junction at Air Balloon roundabout would not be feasible as the topography is too steep, and a slip road here would not meet highways safety standards.
	Install a 'hamburger' roundabout at Air Balloon with smart traffic lights.	This suggestion would not meet the objectives set for the scheme as Air Balloon roundabout would continue to be a bottleneck for traffic.
Alternative proposals	Build a raised carriageway for the curved section at Air Balloon; this could become a tourist attraction.	A raised carriageway would have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding Cotswolds landscape and the integrity of the AONB and would not meet the project's objective to reduce the impact on the landscape.
	A slip road should be implemented to allow access between the A417 and Bentham.	A junction at Bentham would not provide sufficient benefits to justify the cost, due to its proximity to the existing junction with the A46.
	A new road should be built between Cowley roundabout and the A435.	There are currently minor roads connecting these communities to the A417 at Cowley roundabout. Further assessment will be carried out to determine whether an additional junction at the existing Cowley roundabout would offer benefits.
	A link road should be built connecting the B4070 to the A417, running south of Birdlip.	

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Provide a junction at the location of the existing Cowley roundabout.	A junction at the existing Cowley roundabout was included in Option 12 but not for Option 30. Further assessment will be carried out to determine whether an additional junction at the existing Cowley roundabout would offer benefits.
	Remove a climbing lane (third uphill lane) from the proposals and ban HGVs from using the outside lane.	Building three lanes for uphill traffic on Crickley Hill would benefit safety and traffic flow. The arrangement would allow heavy vehicles to safely overtake one another while maintaining space for other vehicles to pass.
	The old A417 at Parsons Pitch should be opened again to allow light vehicle traffic to travel to the Golden Heart Inn from Birdlip and through to the Cowley roundabout.	Proposals to reopen the previous route of the A417 at Parsons Pitch are not part of this scheme and could increase rat-running through the village of Birdlip and increase traffic through Nettleton.
	A petrol station or rest point should be included in the proposals.	There are numerous local amenities that could act as rest stops/services. These locations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Golden Heart Inn</li> <li>• The Royal George pub in Birdlip</li> <li>• The Highwayman Inn</li> <li>• the viewpoint car park at Barrow Wake</li> <li>• the café and car park on Crickley Hill</li> <li>• service station in Brockworth</li> <li>• Gloucester Business Park</li> </ul>
Alternative proposals	Improvements should be made to junctions along the A17/419 route (includes Highwayman, Duntisbourne and Castle Eaton junctions) as part of the scheme.	The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment in the strategic road network in the south west to boost economic growth in the region. The A417 Missing Link is part of the Road Investment Strategy, identified as a priority scheme in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public services. Although other transport and road improvement schemes are not included within the Missing Link project, Highways England continually monitors opportunities to improve the strategic road network and these comments are noted.
	As part of the scheme, junction 10 of the M5 should be made full access.	
	As part of the proposals, the A417/419 should be renumbered so that the whole road has one name.	
	Improve the A40 through the centre of Cheltenham as part of the scheme.	The local highway authority, Gloucestershire County Council, has jurisdiction over this section of the A40 and other local roads. Highways

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council to discuss any interaction between and impact on the local road network and the A417.
	Consider a range of transport and local economic planning alternatives, including investment in public transport and active travel schemes.	The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment in the strategic road network in the south west to boost economic growth in the region. The A417 Missing Link is part of the Road Investment Strategy, identified as a priority scheme in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public services. Although other transport and road improvement schemes are not included within the Missing Link project, Highways England continually monitors opportunities to improve the strategic road network and these comments are noted.
	The money should be spent building another bridge over the Severn nearby Westbury; this would stop Forest of Dean traffic queueing for miles at the approach to the Over roundabout.	
	The A38 and A40 should be widened.	
	Implement demand management strategies with smart road technologies.	
	Fixed/average speed cameras should be installed instead of the proposals.	As current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase, these suggestions would not address the congestion in this area and would not meet the scheme's objectives to reduce delays and create a free-flowing road network along this stretch of the A417.
Alternative proposals	<p>A number of interim measures should be implemented, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speed limit of 40mph either side of the B4070 junction</li> <li>• warnings of tailbacks on the approach to Cowley roundabout and on the approach to Crickley Hill</li> <li>• signage highlighting that the area is an accident hotspot</li> <li>• a continuous double white line in place of the centre line between the B4070 junction and Nettleton Bottom</li> <li>• a traffic noise barrier adjacent to Birdlip, Parsons Pitch and Hecate Hill</li> <li>• a safer crossing point at Air Balloon for Cotswold Way and Gloucestershire Way walkers</li> </ul>	These suggestions are noted and will be discussed with the local highway authority, Gloucestershire County Council. Where relevant to the scheme, they will be considered in future stages of design and development.

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>traffic calming measures in local villages, including proper kerbs, 30mph speed limits and potentially traffic lights</li> </ul>	
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	The scheme should aim to maintain the integrity of the AONB and take into account the sensitive nature of the area and the countryside.	Highways England fully recognises the sensitive landscape of the Cotswolds and has carried out environmental assessments and studies to understand how the landscape could accommodate the proposed route options. Highways England has met with representatives from environmental groups, statutory agencies and local authorities to discuss opportunities for enhancing the landscape in this area and will continue to work closely with them to identify and include measures to reduce any adverse effects the scheme may have. Further details will be presented in future consultation stages.
	Any surface route must be in a cutting to minimise the visual impact on the AONB. Includes comments that the proposed route should be hidden by planting trees and foliage along the cutting.	Option 30 has been selected to be taken forward and it would be in a cutting for much of the route, which would lower the visual impact. Further mitigation measures will be assessed and incorporated into the design to help minimise any adverse visual effects. Further details will be presented in future consultation stages.
	Road materials used should be sensitive to the surrounding countryside.	Road materials will be selected in future stages of the design and assessment of the scheme and minimising the visual impact on the surrounding area presented in future consultation stages will be a consideration. Further details will be presented in future consultation stages.
	Routing the A417 away from Birdlip would be best for the AONB.	As outlined in the Technical Appraisal Report, the design and assessment of the scheme to date has involved balancing a number of considerations, including any impact on the AONB. The selection of route options put forward for consultation has been made on the basis they provide the best solutions to deliver the scheme objectives.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	Money should be set aside for the full archaeological investigation along the entire length of the preferred route, particularly as Crickley Hill is an important archaeological site and the scheme should take care not to disturb any artefacts.	The objectives for the scheme include reducing the impact on the historic environment of the Cotswolds and appropriate resources will be set aside to survey and monitor all areas where the ground would be disturbed by the scheme. If any archaeological or historic ammunition sites were uncovered, measures would be taken to ensure they were dealt with safely and appropriately.
	Concern about historic ammunition disposal sites that are in close proximity to some of the proposed routes.	
	Suggestion to name a nearby junction after the 'Air Balloon' pub.	The names of road junctions will be considered as part of the future development of the scheme.

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Construction	<p>Concern about traffic disruption during construction, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase in rat-running through Elkstone, Brimpsfield and Birdlip</li> <li>• the lack of alternative routes; there should be clear communications to minimise disruption to traffic and locals</li> <li>• diversion of traffic, particularly that a lot would be routed onto the A46 through Cheltenham</li> <li>• maintaining the access between Gloucester and the M4</li> </ul>	<p>Construction methods, phasing and methodology will be developed in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. Highways England will work to ensure that construction is carried out as efficiently as possible with the aim of minimising traffic disruption. All roadworks will be carefully planned and managed to ensure road safety is maintained.</p> <p>Rat-running through local roads is an important consideration and potential mitigation measures during construction will be considered and discussed with the local highway authority, Gloucestershire County Council, during the ongoing development of the scheme.</p>
	Traffic should be diverted along the M4 and M5 via Bristol while the scheme is being built, in particular HGV traffic.	
	Low cost temporary road improvements should be implemented to formalise available alternative routes.	<p>These suggestions are noted and will be discussed with the local highway authority, Gloucestershire County Council.</p> <p>All roadworks will be carefully planned and managed to ensure road safety is maintained and any impact and disruption are minimised.</p>
	Traffic calming measures such as speed restrictions and chicanes should be installed along rat-runs during construction to discourage their use and dangerous driving along them.	
	While the scheme is being constructed, HGVs should be prohibited from using the route during rush hour.	
Construction of the scheme should take place during the summer months to minimise impact on commuters and school children.	<p>It would not be possible to limit construction to summer months as this would cause unacceptable programme delays and increase costs. Construction timing will be taken into account in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. All roadworks will be carefully planned and managed to ensure road safety is maintained and any impact is minimised.</p>	
Construction	Progress of construction works, changes to traffic flow and any significant increases in delays should be publicised.	<p>Highways England will continue to engage stakeholders throughout every stage of the scheme's development. This will include sharing information about construction works and any potential associated impact on traffic flow with the public.</p> <p>The construction programme will be taken into consideration in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. Upon finalisation, it would form part of the contract specification for the appointed contractor.</p>
	Contractors should be held to a tight programme of works and handed a financial penalty if they do not complete the scheme on schedule and within budget.	

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Construction plan and traffic management for the Missing Link should take inspiration from successfully built schemes such as the A3 tunnel and the A27 Brighton bypass.	The construction methodologies of other successful schemes will be considered in the design of the construction plan and traffic management for the A417 Missing Link.
	Concerns that the new route should be constructed in as few sections as possible and in one stage, not two.	Construction methods, phasing and methodology will be developed in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. Highways England will work to ensure that construction is carried out as efficiently as possible with the aim of minimising traffic disruption.
	Care should be taken during construction not to impact Emma's Grove or other archaeological remains.	The objectives for the scheme include reducing the impact on the historic environment of the Cotswolds and Highways England is working with the relevant statutory bodies to avoid impact on archaeological remains wherever possible, both during design and construction of the scheme.
Consultation process	More information (maps/plans, the fly-through videos, etc.) of the proposed routes should have been included on the online survey pages.	These comments are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next consultation stage and ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.
	More details should be provided on specific traffic issues, for example access from Leckhampton Hill to the A436.	More detailed information, including specific traffic issues, will be presented at future consultation stages when further detailed design work has been carried out on the preferred route. This will be held before the scheme proposals are submitted for planning consent.
Consultation process	More information should have been provided on the social/economic impact of the scheme on local businesses, such as the Air Balloon pub and the Golden Heart Inn. This should have been included in the Technical Appraisal Report, alongside proposals that are being put forward to replace any establishment that may be removed.	All options considered would have adverse impacts on a number of residential and commercial properties. The social and economic impact of the proposals on these businesses will be assessed in greater detail as part of the next stage of the design process. Highways England is in discussion with all affected landowners regarding the proposals and will continue to engage with them as the scheme develops.
	An Environmental Impact Assessment and Scheduled Monument Survey should have been undertaken and included in the information provided.	Environmental assessment and appraisals to support the development of the route options have taken place and are discussed in the Technical Appraisal Report. These will continue as the scheme is developed further and a full Environmental Impact Assessment will be undertaken and will be published when the scheme proposals are submitted for planning consent.
	Concerns that a decision has already been made on the scheme to proceed with Option 30 and that the consultation was biased towards Option 30.	The Technical Appraisal Report presented the assessment that was undertaken on the shortlisted options prior to the consultation. Options 12 and 30 were assessed and presented the best opportunities for

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		<p>meeting the scheme’s objectives and both were within the allocated cost range for the scheme. The benefits offered by Option 12 would be less than those provided by Option 30 and, over the 60-year appraisal period, they would deliver a substantially lower return on investment for taxpayers. Option 30 provides greater opportunities to meet the scheme’s objectives and is the only option to offer a positive return on investment for taxpayers.</p> <p>The consultation material presented information on both Options 12 and 30 on an equal basis and was timed to provide the opportunity for the public to express any views and preferences before the decision on the preferred route was made. The input of local people has been particularly valuable as they have been able to respond with detailed knowledge of certain issues relevant to the local area.</p> <p>The consultation attracted a high number of respondents and every response has been read and the feedback helped to inform the choice of preferred route. It will also inform the continued development of the scheme.</p>
Consultation process	Concerns that a tunnel option should have been presented as part of the non-statutory consultation and suggestions that the non-statutory consultation should be restarted with Option 30 and a tunnel option as the two choices.	<p>As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link. All shortlisted tunnel options would have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape, increasing these impacts. When the benefits of tunnel options were weighed against their significant cost, they did not offer value for money for taxpayers and were not taken forward to consultation.</p> <p>Options 12 and 30 were assessed to present the best opportunities to meet the scheme’s objectives and were the only two options within the allocated cost range for the scheme. It would not be appropriate to consult on other options that had been discounted.</p>
	The other options should have been displayed more clearly.	<p>These comments are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next consultation stage and ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.</p>

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	More emphasis should have been placed in the consultation booklet on the road safety improvements the project would bring.	One of the scheme's key objectives is to improve safety along this stretch of the A417. These comments are welcomed and suggestions for including additional information will be taken into consideration when materials are prepared for future consultation stages.
Consultation process	Concerns that local views should be considered equally alongside commercial views on the project.	The consultation provided the opportunity for the public to express any views and preferences, which were taken into consideration before a decision on the preferred route was made. Highways England met with parish councils and other local stakeholder groups and the input of local people has been particularly valuable as they have been able to respond with detailed knowledge of certain issues relevant to the local area. The consultation attracted a high number of responses and the majority of comments came from stakeholders living within close proximity to the scheme. Every response has been read and the feedback has helped inform the choice of preferred route and will also inform the continued development of the scheme. A further statutory consultation will be held to allow the public to make comments on the detailed design before the scheme proposals are submitted for planning consent.
	Suggestion that the proposals should follow a democratic process whereby the residents of Gloucestershire should directly vote on the proposals.	
	Concerns that wildlife conservation groups should be consulted and included in the design work, in particular that the project should work with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to minimise environmental impact.	The objectives for the scheme include reducing the impact on the landscape and natural environment of the Cotswolds. Highways England is working closely with a range of stakeholders, including Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, to discuss the development of the scheme. Highways England will continue to work closely with them to identify and include measures to reduce any adverse effects the scheme may have. Further details will be presented in future consultation stages.
	Local British Horse Society access team should be consulted.	Local walking, cycling, horse-riding and other local access groups were invited to be part of the consultation and Highways England will continue to engage with them during the future design stages for the scheme.
	Concern that the timeline for the implementation of the scheme would be longer than predicted, due to the clashes with the next county council election cycle, Brexit and a potential general election.	Highways England monitors developments that may affect delivery of the scheme and will work with Government to ensure the project maintains its programme.
	The consultation period should be reduced. Selection of a preferred route should take place by the end of April, with a DCO	The timescale that has been set for the scheme reflects the further development and statutory process, including consultation, that must be pursued before construction can start, under Planning Act 2008

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	application submitted by the end of the year, in order for work to start in spring 2020.	requirements. More information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at: <a href="https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess">https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess</a> .
Consultation process	The public should be kept informed of decisions being made as the consultation process progresses.	The public will be kept informed of the scheme's progress throughout all future stages of the project, including the next stage of statutory consultation.
	The consultation should have been advertised on the A417. Involve Countryfile in the scheme to increase publicity.	The consultation was advertised in a range of ways and further information can be found in Chapter 3 of this report. Highways England continually reviews how to promote its consultations to ensure that as many people as possible get involved in its projects and suggestions for wider advertisement will be taken into consideration for future consultation stages.
Economic	The budget should instead be spent locally on projects which benefit local communities; the A417 scheme would mostly only benefit long distance commuting and commercial transport.	The strategic road network plays an important role in the national economy. An improved and efficient strategic road network will maintain competitiveness and help the economy to grow. Without investment in the A417 Missing Link, the existing congestion on the strategic road network caused by the single carriageway sections will worsen and potentially constrain economic development. The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. An important part of the Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment in the south west to boost economic growth in the region, including provision for upgrading the A417 Missing Link. These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution. The A417 forms a vital link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase. Unpredictable delays also mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities.
	Money for the scheme should instead be spent on public transport and other less polluting schemes, environmental schemes and interventions that encourage modal shifts.	
	The money should be directed to maintenance of the existing road network and not new schemes.	

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		Although other transport and road improvement schemes are not included within the Missing Link project, Highways England continually monitors opportunities to improve the strategic road network and these comments are noted.
	Cost estimations for tunnels must be incorrect. Other countries in Europe are able to construct tunnels at cheaper costs.	The cost estimates for the scheme used best-practice information and methodology in line with Department for Transport Guidance.
Economic	Concerns that the budget of the scheme should be increased to build a tunnel and to protect the environment and wildlife.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the tunnel options were assessed to have some benefits but offer poor value for money and have high costs. The tunnel options would also see an overall increase in infrastructure added to the landscape (as the existing A417 would need to be retained for local access), resulting in adverse visual and other environmental effects, such as significant impacts to groundwater in the area. Any potential benefits of the tunnel options when compared with surface options would not be enough to balance these other factors and a tunnel option could not be recommended for further development. The additional costs of a tunnel option over a surface route could also not be justified, particularly in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public projects. Option 30 has been assessed to offer positive value for money, meaning the returns are estimated to be greater than the cost. It is also the only option to have significant opportunities to remove existing infrastructure from the landscape whilst fulfilling the scheme's objectives.
	Concerns that other areas of the country have justified higher budgets for schemes.	The A417 Missing Link is part of the Government's Road Investment Strategy which identifies routes along the strategic road network which need upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. Option 30 provides the most opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and has been assessed to offer positive value for money, meaning the returns are estimated to be greater than the costs. Every project will have differing requirements, challenges and opportunities and an appropriate cost allocation will be set accordingly. As Option 30 could be delivered within the cost allocation set for this

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		project, additional funding for an alternative solution could not be justified, particularly in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public projects.
	Funding should be sought from companies looking at autonomous driving experiments or electrified roads.	This would not be feasible as these companies do not fund road improvement projects as part of their business model.
	Environmental factors should be included in the return on investment calculations, particularly as including natural capital would have put the tunnel options in a more favourable light.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report and in line with approved Department for Transport assessment criteria, certain environmental factors such as air quality, noise impact and greenhouse gas emissions were included in the return on investment calculations. Additional studies on landscape monetisation, sustainability decision modelling, opportunities mapping and landscape during option identification showed that these elements had little effect in differentiating between the six shortlisted options. In addition, there is currently no agreed Department for Transport methodology for the assessment of natural capital that could be applied as part of the cost benefit analysis for a nationally significant road scheme.
	The return on investment could be improved by spending a portion of the budget on high quality cycling and walking routes along the road.	One of the key objectives for the scheme is to improve connectivity for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and Highways England is working with stakeholders to identify opportunities for improvements within the scheme. In addition, a Cycling, Safety and Integration fund of £250m is available for Highways England's entire road network covering 2015 to 2021 and some of this may be available to spend if suitable viable projects can be identified.
Economic	Concern that the return on investment would be eroded by cost overruns.	The return on investment calculations which were undertaken were appropriate for this stage of route development and include allowances for risk and price inflation. The return on investment will continue to be assessed in the further stages of design development.
	The impact of journey time in the ROI calculations is overstated; slight differences of a minute or so between the options would not deter users of the route.	The impact of journey time is not overstated in the ROI calculations for the scheme and follows Department for Transport guidance. As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, over the 60-year period the savings in journey times are worth up to £233m for Option 30.

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	The ROI calculations should take into account and indicate the longevity of the option. For example, if Option 30 would be in place for 50 years, the ROI calculations should consider that time period.	This is part of the economic appraisal methodology. The assessment period for the scheme options was 60 years. Further details can be found in the Technical Appraisal Report.
	The funds should be spent on a project that has a better return on investment.	Value for money is one of the factors taken into account in the justification of the funding for the scheme. The A417 forms a vital link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway and are forecast to increase. Unpredictable delays also mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities. These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution.
	As alternatives to support decision making, the value for money for public transport and 'do nothing' schemes should be presented.	The cost estimations in the Technical Appraisal Report presented the economic value gained or lost in various areas as a result of each proposal in comparison to the 'do nothing' scenario. Calculating the value for money of alternative transport schemes or initiatives has not been done as they are outside Highways England's remit.
	Economic appraisals should be made in the context of the larger M4 to M5 strategic link.	Traffic forecasting work involved a wide area, including the entire A417/A419 link and long sections of the M4 and M5. Economic assessment was based on these traffic forecasts for each option, alongside other factors.
	Mitigation measures for environmental and heritage impact should be costed.	An allowance has been made within the cost estimates for environmental mitigation. Detailed costs for mitigation measures will be considered in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment.
Economic	Concern that the Golden Heart Inn would suffer from loss of trade as a result of the new route not passing by it any more and suggestions that signage should be installed on the new route of A417 directing to the Golden Heart Inn.	All route options would affect a number of residential and commercial properties to varying degrees and the options taken to public consultation will be subject to further refinement. Highways England is in communication with local businesses and landowners affected by the scheme and will continue to engage with them as the scheme develops. The downgrading of the existing A417 in this area is, however, expected to lead to improved, safer journeys in the local area for communities and will help to overcome the sense of severance caused by the existing road.

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		The suggestion of signage will be taken into consideration in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment.
	Concern that after the scheme is built, the South Cotswolds may become a more popular base for commuting, with resulting increased pressures for housing, if this is not effectively countered by a strategy to develop the local economy and employment opportunities.	The scheme is expected to bring significant economic benefits to the local economy. It will support current and future housing and local employment development opportunities in the area.
Engineering	Concern about the gradients on Crickley Hill being too steep.	The topography of Crickley Hill makes it difficult to achieve any significant reduction in gradients over the existing route. The addition of a third lane on Crickley Hill would help mitigate the negative effects of the steep gradients and would significantly improve safety and traffic flow.
	Suggestion that three lanes should be implemented downhill on Crickley Hill, up to the point where the Brockworth Bypass is three lanes (west of the A46 junction).	This would increase the impact of the scheme on the environment and heritage of Crickley Hill and traffic forecasting has shown that three lanes downhill would not be necessary to facilitate future traffic flow.
	Objection to five lanes on Crickley Hill and concerns that three lanes uphill is too much, and two lanes downhill would encourage higher speeds.	Building three lanes for uphill traffic on Crickley Hill would benefit safety and traffic flow. The arrangement would allow heavy vehicles to safely overtake one another while maintaining space for other vehicles to pass. The separation of carriageways and the second downhill lane would improve the free flow of traffic and safety.
Engineering	Concern about the merging of the third uphill lane and suggestion that this should be done at a junction.	This will be considered in the further stages of design development and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	A hard shoulder should be provided along the route for breakdowns.	A hard shoulder is not necessary to meet the road standard for the wider A417/A419 route. The provision of lay-bys and other safe stopping areas will be assessed during future stages of the design of the scheme.
	A central reservation/physical separation between the traffic flows should be implemented along the route.	Both proposed options included some physical separation between the opposite carriageways. This will be assessed in the further stages of design development and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Objection to the use of wire rope in the road barriers; this is hazardous to motorcyclists.	This concern will be taken into account in the design and assessment of the vehicle restraint systems for the scheme during the future stages of design.
	Concerns that street lighting should be provided at junctions and that appropriate lighting should be installed on the route, particularly to allow for the fog that often builds on hill.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, street lighting is not proposed on the mainline route of the A417 but may be installed at the proposed new junctions. A safety assessment of the benefits of street

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		lighting at selected junctions will take place as part of the scheme's future development, and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	Road lighting along the scheme should use renewable energy.	This will be considered in the further stages of design development and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Concerns that all proposed junctions should be grade-separated and objections to roundabouts being used along the route.	All proposed junctions accessing/exiting the new A417 would be grade-separated with slip roads. The design of the junctions will be considered further as part of the next stage in the scheme's development and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	Junctions should be carefully designed to ensure slip roads are long enough.	All junctions and associated slip roads will be designed to meet highways design standards and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Install a roundabout or traffic lights at the Leckhampton Hill/A436 junction.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, modifications to the existing A436/Leckhampton Hill junction would be needed as part of this scheme and this junction will continue to be developed in future stages of the design. Appropriate measures, such as signals or providing a roundabout, will be considered and agreed with Gloucestershire County Council, which is the highway authority responsible for this junction. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.
Engineering	The existing junction between the A417 and the B4070 is dangerous and should be improved as part of the scheme and interim measures should be implemented here.	Option 30 route would bypass the B4070 junction completely and the roundabout would only be used by local traffic, reducing traffic levels significantly and improving safety.
	Concerns about the design of the road surface for the scheme, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>objection to the use of concrete surfacing on the scheme</li> <li>suggestion that anti-skid road surfaces should be used on the downhill sections of the scheme</li> </ul>	Concrete surfacing has not been proposed for the route options. In new schemes, Highways England uses low-noise road surfaces wherever possible. Specific surfacing materials for Option 30 will be considered in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during the next stage of consultation.
	New road should be built with durability to withstand high levels of HGV traffic.	The road design will take into account traffic forecasting and Highways England will ensure the durability of the surface is sufficient for future levels of HGV traffic.
	Banking of the road should be considered to mitigate the impact of bad weather.	The banking of the road will be designed to meet highways design standards.
	Concern about the existing camber at Air Balloon roundabout.	Air Balloon roundabout would be removed under both proposed options.

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	Innovative methods should be used to keep the road clear from snow and ice, including an automatic de-icing system on Crickley Hill.	The proposed design solutions would make traditional methods of winter maintenance more effective, reducing the impact of severe winter weather. Any systems that clear the road from snow and ice automatically are unlikely to be affordable within the maximum allocated cost range of the scheme and snow and ice are not frequent enough in this area for these systems to be cost effective.
	Speed cameras (average or fixed) should be implemented along the route.	Mandatory speed cameras would be required for Option 12 on the tight bend to help manage safety. However, Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and, based on assessments to date, speed cameras would not be needed to manage safety on the route.
	Install smart road infrastructure as part of the scheme, instead of retrofitting in 10 years' time.	Installing 'smart' infrastructure will be considered in further stages of design and allowances may be made within the design to reduce future costs of implementation. Any installation of such infrastructure would need to be undertaken on a route-wide basis.
Environment	Objection to the scheme on the basis that it is contrary to the UK's climate obligations, as it would increase the amount of traffic and traffic related emissions.	The analysis of the scheme accepts that it would cause an increase in traffic related greenhouse gas emissions. This has been monetised as a negative impact and is a significant component of the value for money calculation.
	More consideration is needed for the effect the scheme would have on the Cotswolds countryside.	Highways England fully recognises the sensitive landscape of the Cotswolds and has carried out environmental assessments and studies to understand how the landscape could accommodate the proposed route options. Highways England has met with representatives from environmental groups, statutory agencies and local authorities to discuss opportunities for enhancing the landscape in this area and will continue to work closely with them to identify and include measures to reduce any adverse effects the scheme may have. Further details will be presented in future consultation stages.
	Noise reducing surfacing should be used for the road. Includes specific comments requesting noise reducing measures near Little Witcombe.	Highways England uses low-noise road surfaces wherever possible. Specific surfacing materials and noise mitigation measures will be considered in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during futures stages of consultation.
	Excavated material should be used to construct banks that deflect sound from the walking routes in the area.	
	New trees should be planted along the route to reduce pollution and noise.	

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	Concerns that increasing traffic flow along this corridor would lead to increased levels of noise pollution, particularly along the existing concrete surfaced section of the A417/419 between Daglingworth and Latton, which should be resurfaced as the noise levels it currently generates are very high.	Current levels of traffic are expected to increase regardless of whether the scheme is constructed. The analysis of the scheme accepts that it would cause an increase in traffic, and the impact of the scheme on related roads has been considered in its assessment. Highways England will continue to assess this in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact, where possible. While the A417 route is likely to become busier, noise assessments do not suggest there would be a significant increase in noise along the corridor. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.
Environment	Restoration packages should include geology, the Cotswolds meadows and tree copses.	A key objective for the scheme is to reduce the impact on the landscape and the environment. The concerns raised here about effects on woodlands, habitats and wildlife will be carefully considered in the next stage of the design. Highways England will continue to work closely with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to develop appropriate mitigation measures and ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.
	Scheme should include landscaping for indigenous species and planting that encourages pollinating insects.	
	Concern about the impact of the route on wildlife, including suggestions that alternative habitats should be provided to compensate those lost as a result of the scheme construction and specific concerns raised about badgers, deer, foxes, hedgehogs, and a variety of bird species.	
	A 1.8-metre-high fence should be installed along the proposed route to prevent deer from Ullenwood attempting to cross.	
	Concern about the impact on local ecology at Barrow Wake and Crickley Hill.	
	Concerns that there may be rare species present in the area that would be affected by the proposals.	Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation (as well as other sites which could hold a designation related to rare species) were identified as constraints during the identification of options and affected the choice of shortlisted options. Habitat and ecology surveys have been conducted and more follow-up work is planned for 2019. This will inform the Environmental Impact Assessment. All measures required to protect these species will be taken.
Suggestions that green bridges or habitat corridors should be built across the road, including a green bridge between Barrow Wake and Crickley Hill.	A provision for building a green bridge in the vicinity of Air Balloon roundabout has been included in the cost estimate for Option 30 to improve connectivity between the habitats at the Crickley Hill and	

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	A tunnel option should be taken forward so that the area can be returned to a nature reserve.	Barrow Wake SSSI, which are currently severed by the existing A417. More details will be presented during future stages of consultation.  As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link. All shortlisted tunnel options would have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would need to be retained for local access so could not be returned to nature.  When the benefits of tunnel options were weighed against their significant cost, they did not offer value for money for taxpayers and were not taken forward to consultation.
Environment	Concern about the impact of the proposed cuttings on drainage and the water table, and subsequent effects on the ancient woodland in Ullenwood.	Cuttings are not expected to have any significant effects on the water table, drainage or Ullenwood. A full assessment on local hydrology and hydrogeology will be considered in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	If possible, the scheme should look to enhance the view of geological features in the area.	This will be considered in the future design of the scheme.
	Road lighting should not be used along the route or should be designed so that it doesn't cause light pollution to the area.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, street lighting is not proposed on the mainline route of the A417 and will only be installed where it is necessary for safety. An assessment of any benefits of street lighting at selected junctions will take place as part of the scheme's future development, and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	LED lighting should be used for less power consumption and should be directed in such a way to minimise light pollution.	
	Concerned about the impact of adverse weather on the route, including heavy rainfall, snow, ice, and fog.	One the key objectives for the scheme is to improve safety along this stretch of the A417 and adverse weather conditions, including fog, snow and ice, will be a key consideration in the development of the scheme's design.
	Concern about the carbon footprint of the scheme; steps should be taken to minimise this.	Every effort will be made in the design and construction of the scheme to minimise the carbon footprint of the scheme as much as is practicably possible.
	An Environmental Impact Assessment should be carried out.	An Environmental Impact Assessment will be completed and submitted with the scheme's planning application.

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Land requirements	Concern about the removal of the Air Balloon pub on the basis that it is popular among locals and walkers and there should be assessment done into replacing or relocating it.	All options considered would have adverse impacts on a number of residential and commercial properties. Highways England is in discussion with all affected local businesses and landowners regarding the proposals, and will continue to engage with them as the scheme develops. Any mitigation or compensation for impact on businesses will remain confidential with the affected parties at this stage.
	The cottages adjacent to Air Balloon roundabout should be compulsory purchased.	
	Concerned about the impact of the scheme on the Flyup Bike Centre.	
	Ullenwood Bharat cricket ground should be retained.	
Land requirements	The implications of increased urbanisation of the Green Belt should be taken into account.	The impact on the urban centres and designated landscapes around the scheme have been taken into account in the development of the route options.
Legacy	<p>Preserve the integrity of existing public rights of way in the area or provide alternative routes. Concerns that a number of existing rights of way might be removed by the scheme proposals, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the footpath from Dog Lane that runs up the northern side of the A417 to Air Balloon; this provides a less steep alternative for cyclists than Birdlip Hill</li> <li>the bridleway which crosses the proposed route in the same location as the Gloucestershire Way, leading from the Masts to South Hill</li> <li>a bridleway that runs from Shab Hill directly eastwards to Cowley Lane; a bridge should be built for this bridleway or the landowners of the area should accept a diversion from the farm at Stockwell through to Shab Hill farm</li> <li>an ORPA (other public right of way) from South Hill to Birdlip radio station, and one across Shab Hill from the existing A417. Both of these will be registered by 2026</li> </ul>	<p>Maintaining connectivity to and between rights of way and overcoming severance of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders is a key consideration and will continue to be a key consideration in the further development of the route design.</p> <p>Highways England's Cycling Strategy seeks to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport through the development of an integrated, comprehensive and high quality cycling network, including facilities that are safe and separate from traffic. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council, which is responsible for the improvement of local rights of way, to assess and agree how footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways can be maintained and improved. More details will be presented during future stages of public consultation.</p>
	Build a pedestrian/cycle path between Birdlip and the Golden Heart Inn as this is currently unwalkable due to the level of traffic on the A417.	

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	<p>Provide a pedestrian/cycle path along the existing A417, paralleling the route up the escarpment.</p> <p>Install a new pavement on the east side of the road at Leckhampton Hill.</p> <p>Link footpaths and cycle routes currently interrupted by the A417, including the provision of a cycle track/footpath between Cold Slad and Dog Lane, a link to the bridleway that ends opposite Cold Slad Lane, and a crossing for the Gloucestershire Way, Cotswold Way and Gustav Holst Way at Air Balloon.</p> <p>Suggestions that safe crossings along the road should be provided for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, as well as for adjoined farm land; that horse friendly crossings should be provided; that underpasses are preferred over bridges; and that any bridges should have sufficiently high parapets and width.</p> <p>A bridge or underpass should be built at the Stockwell junction.</p>	
Legacy	<p>Sections of the existing A417 should be converted to cycle paths/footpaths or returned to green land, particularly between the B4070 junction and the Stockwell junction.</p> <p>The cycling corridor between Cheltenham and Stroud should be improved by including provision for cyclists along the existing A436/417.</p> <p>A cycle route should be built between Crickley Hill and the Highwayman pub.</p> <p>Improve cycling routes through Birdlip and Brimpsfield.</p> <p>Strava heat maps should be used to help assess the popularity of cycle routes in the area.</p> <p>Public rights of way should be lined with adequate fencing or treeline to separate traffic and path users.</p> <p>Local authorities should build more housing to mitigate the increased demand from the proposed improvements.</p> <p>Lay fibre optic cables concurrently with the road to help bring broadband to rural areas.</p>	<p>As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report and consultation booklet, there is an opportunity under Option 30 to remove a length of the existing A417. These suggestions will be considered further in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment.</p> <p>Local cycle routes are the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council. Highways England is working closely with the Council to maintain and improve cycling routes where possible in the development of the scheme.</p> <p>Rounded datasets, based on a variety of methods, will be used to assess walking, cycling and horse-riding routes.</p> <p>This will be considered in the ongoing design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.</p> <p>Housing policy is outside the scope of the scheme; however, the new road would be included in local development plans.</p> <p>Highways England will liaise with the statutory undertakers, including the broadband and telecoms companies, to understand any future plans</p>

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		they may have for work in the area and to work together to reduce disruption.
	Barrow Wake should be returned to nature as part of the scheme.	This will be considered in the ongoing design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
Need	General support for the scheme and the need for improvements to be made to the missing link.	Highways England recognises the need for the A417 to be improved as quickly as possible, and every effort will be made to ensure that construction can begin as soon as possible. The timescale that has been set for the scheme reflects the further development and statutory process, including consultation, that must be pursued before construction can start, under Planning Act 2008 requirements. More information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at: <a href="https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess">https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess</a> .
	Scheme should be progressed more quickly, and the programme should be accelerated.	
	Concerns that there were other transport issues in the region, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• money should be spent on other environmental and travel related schemes that encourage people to change their travel choices and improve road safety in addition to local quality of life</li> <li>• congestion on the A417 is comparable to other locations around Gloucester and Cheltenham; there isn't any point in improving this bottleneck without improving the others</li> <li>• the scheme would encourage more traffic through the area and transfer congestion to Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud</li> <li>• more roads should not be built at the expense of landscape and quality of life for local communities</li> <li>• freight should be taken onto rail and water networks; this would remove the need for the scheme</li> <li>• the existing road is adequate; speeding motorists are the main issue and if road signs and markings were observed and obeyed then there would be no problem.</li> </ul>	
		These improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution. The A417 forms a vital link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon. Sharp turns and steep climbs along this stretch of road are hazardous and unpredictable delays mean motorists often divert onto local roads, causing further difficulties for neighbouring communities. Current levels of traffic already exceed those suited to a single lane carriageway, even without freight being considered, and are expected to increase further. Traffic forecasts show that building Option 30 would be sufficient to manage future traffic flows on the A417 up to 2039. Developing alternative modes of transport to solve the identified capacity problem on the existing A417 Missing Link has been considered. Studies have shown a reduction of more than 15,000 person trips per day (by 2024) would be needed to solve the existing and forecast capacity problem. A package of alternative transport initiatives could potentially complement the proposed highway scheme but would not reduce demand on the existing highway sufficiently to address the problems.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a wider strategic solution is needed for the whole A417/419 corridor</li> </ul>	<p>The impact of any individual intervention is limited as journey origins and destinations for users of the A417 are distributed over a wide area. As an example, any local rail improvements between Cheltenham and Swindon would only be relevant to a small fraction of existing A417 traffic. Of this small fraction of A417 traffic, not all users would be enticed onto the rail network, further limiting net traffic reductions. Improvements to alternative modes of transport would not address the existing safety concerns relating to the A417 Missing Link and could not provide an effective solution, without a fundamental overhaul of local, regional and national infrastructure with costs and scope far exceeding the proposed scheme.</p>
Traffic and transport	Separation of commercial and private traffic should be considered between the existing and new route.	This would not be feasible and would not deliver the scheme's objective to create a free-flowing road network along this stretch of the A417.
	There should be an equal consideration between different traffic flows, for example local traffic should be given equal consideration to M5-bound traffic.	Traffic forecasting and modelling work has taken place to ensure that the proposals would create a free-flowing road network. All traffic flows including local, regional and national traffic have been considered.
	Early warning signs for congestion should be implemented along the route.	This will be considered in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Concern about the removal of access to Elkstone, Cowley and Brimpsfield at the Cowley roundabout, particularly as this would affect public transport routes.	A junction at the existing Cowley roundabout was included in Option 12 but not for Option 30. Further assessment will be carried out to determine whether an additional junction at the existing Cowley roundabout would offer benefits.
	Access to Shab Hill should be maintained.	The existing roads that access Shab Hill would be maintained, with junctions onto the existing A417 and the B4070.
	Cold Slad should not connect to the A417; it should run further up the hill and connect with the A436.	Cold Slad would not be directly connected to the new A417. Access to Cold Slad would be maintained from the existing A417, which would be improved from a road safety perspective.
	Concern that the free flow of traffic on the A436 would make it difficult/dangerous for Leckhampton Hill traffic to join the road.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, a traffic model was developed to assess the options for the A417 Missing Link. The model was used to forecast increases in traffic flows on the A417 and local routes, including Leckhampton Hill. Modifications to the existing A436/Leckhampton Hill junction would be needed as part of this scheme and this junction will continue to be developed in future stages of the design. Appropriate measures, such as signals or providing a

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		roundabout, will be considered and agreed with Gloucestershire County Council, which is the highway authority responsible for this junction. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.
	Concern about local rat-runs continuing to be used following the scheme being implemented. Includes concerns specifically about the Birdlip Hill rat-run and the Elkstone rat-run.	The reduction in rat-running through local roads is an important consideration of the scheme. The new road would improve journey times, reduce delays and increase reliability for traffic using the A417. This would remove any incentive for motorists to divert onto local roads and is expected to reduce congestion on the local road network and reduce rat-running through Birdlip Hill. The location of the Missing Link in relation to east Cheltenham is such that any improvement work would be unable to eliminate rat-running along the Elkstone route completely. However, it is anticipated that Option 30 proposals would reduce rat-running through Elkstone by encouraging traffic to use the new free-flowing and safer A417.
Traffic and transport	Ease of access to the Golden Heart Inn should be maintained, and brown signage should be installed to direct people towards it.	The suggestion of signage will be taken into consideration in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment.
	Concern about the climbing lane up Crickley Hill disappearing; this may cause accidents and queueing.	The third lane will be designed to reduce any queueing and maximise safety.
	HGVs should be banned from overtaking going up Crickley Hill.	Building three lanes for uphill traffic on Crickley Hill would benefit safety and traffic flow. The arrangement would allow heavy vehicles to safely overtake one another while maintaining space for other vehicles to pass.
	Implement a weight limit up Crickley Hill.	
	A peak congestion charge should be implemented between Air Balloon roundabout and Cirencester.	This would not meet the objectives of the scheme, as it would increase the pressure on local roads that already experience traffic levels above what they were designed to accommodate.
	The speed limit should be reduced along the route.	The proposed options have been designed to meet the objectives for the scheme, which include creating a free-flowing road network along this stretch of the A417. As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the alignment for Option 30 would allow a 70mph limit along the entire length.
Signage should be installed indicating danger during adverse weather, in particular ice/fog.	This will be considered in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.	
Traffic and transport	Goods vehicles should be banned from using the A419 between Cirencester and Stroud/Stonehouse.	This falls outside of the scope of the improvement of the Missing Link.

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Concern that commuting between East Cheltenham and Swindon would still take place via the A435.	The location of the Missing Link in relation to East Cheltenham is such that any improvement work would be unable to completely eliminate rat-running along the A435. However, it is anticipated that the new route would reduce rat-running by encouraging traffic to use the new free-flowing and safer A417.
	Concern about the effect of the proposals on the A436 between the Air Balloon and Seven Springs, where there are numerous accidents. Suggestion that traffic calming is needed along this road, in particular to slow down HGVs.	The scheme has been, and will continue to be, developed in full collaboration with the relevant local highways authorities. The impact of the scheme on nearby roads, junctions and city/town centres has been considered in its assessment and will continue to be assessed in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact where possible.
	Concern about the effects of the increase in traffic using the A417 on Junction 11a of the M5, including concerns that queueing traffic at the M5 may cause accidents with high-speed traffic coming down the hill.	
	Concern that once the scheme is complete, goods vehicles would use the A419 to Stroud to join the M5.	
	Concern about increased traffic at the Zoon's Court and C&G roundabouts in Gloucester and that queueing would increase in these locations.	
	Concern about the scheme causing an increase in traffic on the A46, which is already full.	
	Traffic surveys should be undertaken regularly in order to confirm that improvements would be able to support future traffic.	
	Concern that the traffic modelling undertaken has not accounted for the removal of Severn Crossing charges.	Traffic forecasts to 2039 have been undertaken based on traffic surveys completed as part of the scheme development. These will continue in order to support its design and appraisal.  The removal of toll charges from the two Severn crossings in 2018 has been fully accounted for in the current scheme assessment. Updated information on the assessments will be published in the Scheme Assessment Report (which can be viewed online at <a href="https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/">https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/</a> ) and more details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.
	Bus lay-bys should be provided at key points such as Air Balloon and Birdlip, as Gloucestershire County Council may continue to provide a bus service along this road.	The local bus network is operated by Gloucestershire County Council, and the improvement of bus routes (including new bus stops) falls under their jurisdiction. Highways England will work closely with the Council to ensure their public transport network is accommodated as the scheme develops.
	A bus link should be provided between Cheltenham and Chalford.	

Table 6.5: Matters raised by the public (Question 6 - Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?)

Question 6: Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Alternative proposals	Maintain the existing arrangement at Air Balloon roundabout and install free-flowing slip roads connecting the sections of A417 west and south of Air Balloon roundabout. These proposed slip roads would be limited to use by cars only; HGVs and other larger vehicles would use the roundabout.	This proposal is similar to options that have been discounted because the gradient and bends needed to make these options viable would not meet design and safety standards for road schemes. In addition, banning HGVs from using the slip roads and the impact the eastbound slip road would have on Emma's Grove Scheduled Monument mean this option would not deliver against the scheme's objectives.
	Improvements should be made to the B4070 in regard to maintenance and traffic management, particularly as it enters Stroud.	The local highway authority, Gloucestershire County Council, is responsible for any improvements to local roads. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council to discuss any interaction and impact on the local road network and the A417.
Alternative proposals	<p>Concerns that other schemes are needed in Gloucestershire, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new junctions on the M5 around Gloucester; between J12 and 11a, three junctions to Waterwells Drive (new junction), Stroud (A4173) and Painswick (B4073)</li> <li>• new junction between M50 and A38</li> <li>• new junctions and roads on the M5 near Bristol; before Junction 19 (new road to the A369), new road to the M49 from J17, a new junction at the B427 to Yate, and a new junction at the A4135 to Dursley</li> <li>• new junction on the M4 near Bristol, onto the A432</li> <li>• removal of A4369 from Junction 19 of the M5 and re-connection to a new junction further south</li> <li>• on the M5 near Weston Super Mare; two new junctions between J20 and J21 (on the A371 and A38), a new junction in between J23 and 24 (at the A372), and a new junction between J24 and 25 (at the A361)</li> <li>• new western bypass at Swindon (starting near Royal Wootton Bassett) connecting the M4 and the A419</li> </ul>	<p>The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. An important part of the Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment in the south west to boost economic growth in the region, including provision for upgrading the A417 Missing Link.</p> <p>Highways England continually monitors opportunities to improve the strategic road network. Comments on roads which are not part of the strategic road network will be passed to the relevant operators.</p>

Question 6: Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new junctions on the M4 at Swindon, west of J15 at the A4361 and east of J15 connecting to the B4192/The Ridgeway</li> <li>new road around the South Marston industrial estate in Swindon, connecting to the A419 on both ends with junctions at the A420 and A361</li> <li>near Chippenham, new eastern bypass between the A350 and the A4 and a southern bypass between the A350 and Canal Road</li> <li>near Chippenham, a new set of roads linking the A350 and the M4 either side of Junction 17</li> </ul>	
Construction	Concerns that the roadworks would need careful management.	Highways England will develop detailed traffic management plans with the aim of minimising traffic disruption during construction. All roadworks will be carefully planned and managed to ensure road safety is maintained. More details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
Consultation process	Concerns that the maps and videos provided for the public consultation were not detailed enough, including comments that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the fly-through videos needed more detail on local traffic arrangements</li> <li>grid references should have been used to describe locations, instead of chainages</li> <li>the consultation material should have included a cross-section of the road where it intersects the hill</li> <li>more points of orientation should have been provided on the consultation maps, including the existing A417 and local landmarks such as Emma's Grove</li> </ul>	These comments are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next consultation stage and ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.
	The online survey should have included the maps of the options, or a link to them.	
	The consultation brochure should have been made easier to find on the website.	

Question 6: Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Consultation process	The fly-through videos should have shown the route from driver level to highlight the proposed engineering structures and landscaping.	The fly-through videos were produced to help people understand the two routes and to show how they might fit into the landscape. Many positive comments on the videos were received from members of the public who felt they aided their understanding of the proposals.
	The fly-through videos were a waste of money.	
	More information should have been provided on the proposals, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>greater detail on environmental effects</li> <li>showing the land take required around proposed carriageways and associated implications for landowners on consultation plans</li> <li>publishing the return on investment calculations</li> <li>a 3D model showing contours to assist the discussion of the option</li> </ul>	These comments are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next consultation stage and ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.
	The consultation materials should have included more explanation of the road arrangements, junctions and technical details, and the consultation booklet should have explained the differences between junction types.	
	The literature should have made it clearer that both options require the demolition of the Air Balloon pub.	
	The 'do minimum' scenario should have been outlined in the consultation clearly as a comparator.	The Technical Appraisal Report contained detailed information on the assessments carried out on the shortlisted route options. For much of the analysis, including the economic and traffic modelling work, the six options were compared against a 'do minimum' scenario.
	The consultation should have been more honest in presenting the pros and cons.	The consultation material presented relevant data and information about the scheme proposals without bias.
Consultation process	Concerns that more options, particularly a tunnel option, should have been presented as part of the consultation.	The Technical Appraisal Report presented the assessment that was undertaken on the shortlisted options prior to the consultation. Options 12 and 30 were assessed and presented the best opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and were the only two options within the allocated cost range for the scheme. It would not be appropriate to consult on other options that had been discounted.
	Concerns that the consultation was a waste of money, dishonest and undemocratic because Option 30 was presented as the proposed solution.	The consultation material presented information on both Options 12 and 30 on an equal basis and was timed to provide the opportunity for the public to express any views and preferences before the decision on the

Question 6: Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<p>Concern that a decision has already been made on the scheme to proceed with Option 30.</p> <p>The consultation is a box ticking exercise to say that the public were consulted.</p> <p>Concern that feedback from the public consultation would not be taken into account.</p> <p>Concerns that the consultation was not advertised enough, including suggestions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• radio advertising, for example after the morning traffic report on Radio 2</li> <li>• signage along the route</li> <li>• more social media circulation</li> <li>• notices posted to local businesses</li> <li>• door-to-door visits by consultation staff</li> <li>• more advertisement in Cheltenham, Gloucester and Swindon</li> </ul>	<p>preferred route was made. The input of local people has been particularly valuable as they have been able to respond with detailed knowledge of certain issues relevant to the local area.</p> <p>The consultation attracted a high number of respondents and every response has been read and the feedback helped to inform the choice of preferred route. It will also inform the continued development of the scheme.</p> <p>The consultation was advertised in a range of ways and further information can be found in Chapter 3 of this report.</p> <p>To ensure awareness and availability of material, consultation material was also made available at the six public events; the public information and deposit locations around the county; and on the consultation website. Highways England continually reviews how to promote its consultations to ensure that as many people as possible get involved in its projects and suggestions for wider advertisement will be taken into consideration for the next stage of consultation.</p>
Consultation process	<p>Churchdown was overlooked in the consultation process; a mail drop should have taken place here.</p> <p>A consultation event should have been held in Cheltenham.</p> <p>Comments that consultation events should have been held in other locations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birdlip</li> <li>• Stroud</li> <li>• Tewkesbury</li> <li>• Cirencester</li> </ul> <p>Consultation events should have taken place at the weekend.</p> <p>The National Star College event should have taken place during the working week for the benefit of staff.</p> <p>The Elkstone public consultation event should have had more parking.</p> <p>Elkstone residents did not receive any newsletter or letters from Highways England about the consultation.</p>	<p>A public event was held in St Andrews Church Hall in Cheltenham on Saturday 24 February 2018.</p> <p>Six public events were held at a range of locations and venues and included a mixture of weekday and weekend dates and evenings. They were selected to be accessible as possible and around 800 people attended the events. Copies of all information relating to the consultation were also available online, at deposit locations and public information points to enable those who could not attend an event to access it.</p> <p>Additional or alternative venues will be considered for the next stage of public consultation, which is currently scheduled for summer 2019.</p> <p>The consultation was advertised in a range of ways and further information can be found in Chapter 3 of this report. Highways England</p>

Question 6: Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Consultation forms should have been provided at the Golden Heart Inn.	continually reviews how to promote its consultations to ensure that as many people as possible get involved in its projects.
Consultation process	Cirencester local information point was poorly advertised and did not have a display of the options.	To ensure awareness and availability of material, consultation material was also made available at the six public events; the public information and deposit locations around the county; and on the consultation website.
	All communities along the A417/419 should have been directly consulted.	The public information points were set up to enable people to collect copies of the consultation materials, including the consultation booklet and feedback form, which contained plans of the options
	Gloucestershire Constabulary roads policing unit officers or the specialist collision investigation unit should have been consulted regarding this road.	Highways England wrote to all emergency services organisations, including Gloucestershire Constabulary, fire and rescue and ambulance services as part of the consultation and continue to engage with these organisations as the proposals are developed further.
	Regular events, public meetings and one-to-one meetings with local authorities should continue to be held to gain maximum feedback and ensure that there is as much balance as possible to everyone's views and opinions.	Highways England is continuing to engage with stakeholders, including local authorities, councillors, MPs, environmental groups and business representatives, throughout the scheme's development, including via a series of technical working groups to ensure a balanced overall picture is achieved. A statutory consultation is scheduled for summer 2019, which will provide another opportunity for people to formally comment on more detailed designs, before the scheme is submitted for a Development Consent Order.
Consultation process	An independent technical DfT inspector and a planning inspector should adjudicate on the responses.	Highways England will hold a further statutory public consultation on the preferred route and the consultation process, reports and responses will form part of the Development Consent Order application, which will be made to the Planning Inspectorate. The Planning Inspectorate will undertake further independent consultation and will examine the application on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport, rather than the local planning authority. The Secretary of State for Transport then makes the final decision on consent which would be granted by a Development Consent Order. Highways England is planning to submit its application for this scheme in late 2019/early 2020.
	Frustrations were raised with the length of time it has taken to start progressing a solution to the Missing Link and comments that the scheme has been talked about for too long.	Highways England recognises the need for the A417 to be improved as quickly as possible, and every effort will be made to ensure that construction can begin as soon as possible. The timescale that has been set for the scheme reflects the further development and statutory
	The consultation process is too long.	

Question 6: Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		<p>process, including consultation, that must be pursued before construction can start, under Planning Act 2008 requirements. More information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at:</p> <p><a href="https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess">https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess</a>.</p>
	Six weeks consultation on this scheme is not enough time.	A six-week consultation period goes above the required minimum period of 28 days. A further statutory consultation period is planned for summer 2019, which will provide another opportunity for people to formally comment on more detailed designs, before the scheme is submitted for a Development Consent Order.
Economic	Concern that local businesses would suffer from the scheme as a result of the development hampering the area's natural beauty.	Highways England fully recognises the sensitive landscape of the Cotswolds and has carried out environmental assessments and studies to understand how the landscape could accommodate the proposed route options. Highways England has met with representatives from environmental groups, statutory agencies and local authorities to discuss opportunities for enhancing the landscape in this area and will continue to work closely with them to identify and include measures to reduce any adverse effects the scheme may have. The results of the economic appraisal of the two proposed options, as outlined in the Technical Appraisal Report, suggests that the local economy would benefit from the improved accessibility to the area.
Economic	A lot of money appears to have been spent on the public consultation which could have been put into completing the Missing Link when the A417 was originally upgraded.	<p>The consultation process is necessary to provide opportunities for the public to express views and preferences to be taken into consideration as the scheme is developed.</p> <p>A further statutory consultation period is planned for summer 2019 and is a requirement of the Planning Act 2008.</p>
	Money should have been spent on rail improvements.	The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which need upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. The A417 Missing Link is part of the Road Investment Strategy, and has been identified as a priority scheme in the context of competing demands for investment in other transport schemes and public services.

Question 6: Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		<p>The project is seeking to improve safety and reduce congestion issues along the only remaining single carriageway section of the A417/419 route.</p> <p>Developing alternative modes of transport to solve the identified capacity problem on the existing A417 Missing Link has been considered. Studies have shown a reduction of more than 15,000 person trips per day (by 2024) would be needed to solve the existing and forecast capacity problem. A package of alternative transport initiatives could potentially complement the proposed highway scheme but would not reduce demand on the existing highway sufficiently to address the problems.</p> <p>The impact of any individual intervention is limited as journey origins and destinations for users of the A417 are distributed over a wide area. As an example, any local rail improvements between Cheltenham and Swindon would only be relevant to a small fraction of existing A417 traffic. Of this small fraction of A417 traffic, not all users would be enticed onto the rail network, further limiting net traffic reductions. Improvements to alternative modes of transport would not address the existing safety concerns relating to the A417 Missing Link and could not provide an effective solution, without a fundamental overhaul of local, regional and national infrastructure with costs and scope far exceeding the proposed scheme.</p>
Environment	Concern about drainage at Air Balloon roundabout and its effect on the cricket ground. Run-off currently feeds into a sump drain that deposits water into an area used for car parking south west of the cricket ground, killing the grass and making it difficult to use. Highways England should rectify this situation.	During the development of the preferred route drainage surveys will be undertaken and the final arrangement for the highway network adjacent to the cricket ground will be developed once the drainage regime is fully understood. Appropriate measures will be incorporated into the design to reduce the impact on adjacent landowners.
	More focus is needed on local wildlife.	The importance of local wildlife is recognised within the objectives set for the scheme and will continue to be considered as part of the ongoing development of the scheme. Further information will be available as part of the statutory consultation, currently planned for summer 2019.
Land requirements	Concern about the Ullenwood Bharat cricket ground being affected by the scheme.	The proposals for Option 30 do not require any land from the Ullenwood Bharat cricket ground. If this changes during the ongoing development of the scheme, discussions will take place with the landowners.

Question 6: Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Legacy	Crossings for bridleways should be underpasses and not bridges.	Maintaining connectivity to and between rights of way and overcoming severance of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders is a key objective of the scheme and will continue to be a key consideration in the further development of the route design. Highways England's Cycling Strategy seeks to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport through the development of an integrated, comprehensive and high quality cycling network, including facilities that are safe and separate from traffic. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council, which is responsible for the improvement of local rights of way, to assess and agree how footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways can be maintained and to identify opportunities for improvements to routes for non-motorised users. More details will be presented during the next stage of public consultation.
Need	Support for something to be done to solve the existing traffic and road safety issues. Includes comments that the scheme should be progressed quickly/expedited.	Highways England recognises the need for the A417 to be improved, and every effort will be made to ensure that construction can begin as soon as possible. The timescale that has been set for the scheme reflects the required design work to further develop the scheme, as well as the statutory process, including consultation, that must be pursued before construction can start, under Planning Act 2008 requirements. More information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at: <a href="https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess">https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/theprocess</a> .
Traffic and transport	Work on the scheme should consider the hundreds of new homes that are due to be built in Brockworth and the resultant increases in traffic levels.	The traffic models for the scheme have taken into consideration all proposed developments which have either submitted a planning application, or where a planning application is imminent.

## 6.3. Responses by statutory bodies

6.3.1. This section summarises the responses of bodies who would be statutory consultees at the next stage of statutory consultation. These bodies are set out in Chapter 3. Table 6.6 below lists the twenty-four bodies that responded to the consultation.

Table 6.6: Statutory bodies responding to public consultation

Statutory bodies responding to public consultation
Ampney Crucis Parish Council
Badgeworth Parish Council
Baunton Parish Council
Brimpsfield Parish council
Cheltenham Borough Council
Cirencester Town Council
Coberley Parish Council
Cotswold District Council
Cotswolds Conservation Board
Councils of Gloucestershire (joint response)
Cowley and Birdlip Parish Council
Daglingworth Parish Council
Environment Agency
Gloucestershire County Council
Hawling Parish Council
Herefordshire Council
Historic England
Latton Parish Council
Natural England
Swindon Borough Council
Syde Parish Council
Tewkesbury Town Council
The Coal Authority
Worcestershire County Council

6.3.2. The response of each statutory body is summarised below, while the full response of each has been included in Appendix M. The matters raised are tabulated under the themes in Table 6.8 to Table 6.12 in section 6.5 below, along with Highways England’s response.

### Ampney Crucis Parish Council

6.3.3. Ampney Crucis Parish Council states its support for Option 30, commenting that this option has the advantage of being more cost effective.

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- 6.3.4. Ampney Crucis Parish Council feels progressing with Option 30 means Highways England should be able to deliver a solution that also addresses the existing issues associated with noise pollution, particularly along the stretch of the A417/419 dual carriageway between Latton and Daglingworth.
- 6.3.5. Ampney Crucis Parish Council is concerned that the consequence of these works would be a significant increase in traffic seeking to cut off the M4/M5 'corner' between Swindon and Gloucester, which would inevitably include an increase in large commercial traffic. Failure to resurface the 'concrete' stretch as part of these works would mean that the increased traffic flows would further disadvantage communities along this short stretch of road.

### **Badgeworth Parish Council**

- 6.3.6. Badgeworth Parish Council strongly prefers Option 30 as it believes it is a safer route option, which allows free-flowing traffic and better addresses the highway needs. It feels it is a better solution to increase traffic flow through the area.
- 6.3.7. Badgeworth Parish Council is concerned that Option 12 has long bends and steep gradients, which would have greater potential for accidents. It believes the 50mph limit would be ignored.
- 6.3.8. The Council also expressed concern about the existing A417 highway if it is not properly dealt with once the new road is built, believing it could be used for anti-social behaviour and activities.
- 6.3.9. Badgeworth Parish Council felt that the consultation events and information provided were good.

### **Baunton Parish Council**

- 6.3.10. Baunton Parish Council supports the proposed road improvements but does not have a preference between the two surface route options. It feels a tunnel would be the most widely preferred option.
- 6.3.11. Baunton Parish Council highlights an existing problem of excessive noise pollution, particularly along the concrete sections of the A419/417 between Latton and Daglingworth. Baunton Parish Council is concerned that this would be exacerbated by an overall increase in traffic generated by the new route, particularly given the 24-hour nature of traffic and possible increases in heavy goods vehicles. This should be a consideration when setting noise criteria for the new route.

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### **Brimpsfield Parish Council**

- 6.3.12. Brimpsfield Parish Council hosted two of its own consultation events with parishioners to gather feedback on proposals.
- 6.3.13. The Council notes that Brimpsfield suffers terribly as a rat-run at present and there is a concern that this will be exacerbated until the new dual carriageway is complete. A range of interim traffic calming measures were put forward, including speed cameras, better signposting to advise of single track roads and the reinstatement of formal passing places.
- 6.3.14. Existing cycle paths, footpaths and bridleways should be an important matter when considering the new A417 Missing Link solutions. The Council would like to see greater detail on local road access.

### **Cheltenham Borough Council**

- 6.3.15. Cheltenham Borough Council believes that the A417 scheme is vital for improving road access to the south of Cheltenham and is important for the entire region in terms of economic growth, productivity, air quality and environmental impact.
- 6.3.16. Cheltenham Borough Council supports Option 30 as the most effective way to tackle the current traffic problems on the A417 as it feels it has advantages over Option 12, which would require speed restrictions, have steeper gradients than Option 30 and provide a very low return on investment.
- 6.3.17. Cheltenham Borough Council noted that tunnelled options should not be ruled out if the anticipated costs of Option 30 and its associated mitigation escalate.
- 6.3.18. Cheltenham Borough Council added that any impact on the highways network and the environment during construction must be properly considered as these cause delays and expense to road users and affect local communities.

### **Cirencester Town Council**

- 6.3.19. Cirencester Town Council responded stating that, of the route options identified to improve safety and address congestion issues, Option 30 is the most cost effective. Cirencester Town Council considers that a comprehensive assessment of alternative solutions is missing and that developing a plan for economic growth which protects the environment should be included within any assessment on scheme viability. It also believes that investing in job creation across the county, minimising a need to travel, could be more cost effective than reacting to induced traffic demand from focused economic growth in Cheltenham and Gloucester.

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## Coberley Parish Council

- 6.3.20. Coberley Parish Council unanimously supports the proposals in that either one of Option 12 or Option 30 should be adopted. The Council was divided over which option is preferred. It sees Option 12 as having less negative environmental impact, but its tighter bend and speed limits indicate a greater risk of accidents. Option 30 offers a better return on investment and safeguards the two cottages. However, Option 30 is also perceived to have a greater environmental, landscape and local social impact than Option 12. The Council also notes that Highways England's financial model favours Option 30, and wishes to be reassured that local environmental interests have been considered equally to the commercial interests of route users.
- 6.3.21. Coberley Parish Council asks for the following issues to be considered:
- the junction at the Cowley/Ullenwood crossroads on the A436 must be addressed by the relevant agency as traffic speeds and volume are likely to increase under the proposed new road system
  - all footpaths (Cotswold Way at Air Balloon; footpath at Nettleton Bottom) are adequately catered for to ensure safe crossing of the new road
  - clarification of access to Shab Hill and Cuckoo Pen Farm (also Stockwell)
  - detailed proposals for the Leckhampton Hill Road/A436 junction. The Council stresses that it is vital – it is not just a standard junction because of traffic speeds. They have asked for traffic lights or a roundabout to be put in place

## Cotswold District Council

- 6.3.22. Cotswold District Council fully supports Option 30 as its preferred option for the route, noting it is “of paramount importance” that the Government invests in the scheme as the Council has been seeking improvements to this route since the mid-1990s. Both political groups within the council support Option 30 and approve that it provides a positive return on investment. The Council also supports Option 30 as it diverts traffic away from the escarpment edge and the village of Birdlip and other isolated dwellings.
- 6.3.23. Cotswold District Council states that if a natural capital methodology had been adopted, tunnel options could have been investigated further and had a fairer hearing. The Council believes Option 12 would have a greater impact on noise for residents, hence the backing of Option 30.
- 6.3.24. The Council has raised the following issues and potential improvements for the scheme:

- a steep 7.5% gradient would create challenges for traffic using the route, particularly HGVs, and affect a range of electric/hybrid vehicles
- fears that the project would offer a fix to the A417 at a cost to the A436
- limited information presented on mitigating the impact of the scheme in environmental terms. The Council expects environmental considerations, such as avoiding noise pollution and lessening the impact of a deep cutting, to be project fundamentals rather than 'nice to haves'
- prioritise the full investigation of removal of the stretch of road from the Stockwell to Birdlip junctions. The Council also suggests the connection to Birdlip could use the old road now serving Barrow Wake and allow a longer stretch of the current route to be removed
- further detail on the green bridge structure which has been put forward to tackle the current severance and the landscape connectivity it can provide
- the area of land locked between the new route, the link road and the retained existing route could be used as a country park to offset the impact of the scheme more generally
- fears of the potential 'urbanising' effect of the scheme, which the Council suggests can be offset by landscaping proposals to reflect local landscape and biodiversity character, a minimum amount of overhead signage and directional lighting where it cannot be avoided
- a more detailed 'open book' analysis of the scheme would provide reassurance that the 'landscape-led' ambition of the scheme is fully costed in
- route options and detailed scheme designs should be assessed for their potential impact on local farming businesses. These assessments should be included in the potential indirect costs of the proposals
- mitigation for potential negative consequences of the scheme, such as increased delay times affecting local businesses and tourism, long-term loss of land and access restrictions to the district
- rat-running needs to be discouraged during the construction phase (the Council is concerned that Option 30's re-routing of the A436 towards Birdlip, before turning onto the A417, would actually favour the existing rat-run from Birdlip to Witcombe and Brockworth, rather than having to merge onto the A417)
- removing the Missing Link bottleneck and the anticipated growth of traffic using the route (particularly freight traffic running at all hours) would create an additional load on the existing dual carriageway through the Cotswold District

- 6.3.25. The Council raises the prospect of the following benefits resulting indirectly from the scheme:
- potential economic opportunity regarding the need for facilities to service the workforce in the immediate vicinity
  - addressing the lack of connectivity between habitats caused by the current road layout
  - resolving some of the poor linkages within the public right of way system
  - Involving young people in the design and construction process as part of the STEM curriculum
  - tackling noise pollution presents an opportunity for an environmental improvement, leaving the area more tranquil after the scheme is implemented
- 6.3.26. Cotswold District Council states that it would have been useful for more background information, particularly significant data, to have been made available to assist and inform the consultation process. They also add that additional detail would provide a firm commitment that mitigation will be an integral part of the project and better enable consultees to appreciate the relative merits of the scheme. The Council also wishes to participate in future workshops and consultations and would appreciate technical representation on the project's Steering Group.

### **Cotswolds Conservation Board**

- 6.3.27. The Cotswolds Conservation Board believes that a solution to the Missing Link is necessary and that this solution must deliver the agreed vision and design principles. The Board stresses that this solution must be permanent to avoid expensive maintenance work in the future.
- 6.3.28. The Board is concerned that Option 12 and Option 30 do not meet the agreed vision and design principles for the scheme and states that more options, particularly tunnel options, should have been included within the public consultation. The Board states that the tunnel options were identified as outperforming surface route options in terms of economic, environmental and social considerations. The Board also expresses a reservation that Highways England did not use a full set of evidence to enable the public to fully consult on the tunnel options, and that further consideration should have been afforded to these tunnel options.
- 6.3.29. The Board further states that the tunnel options offer lower gradients than the surface route options and only require two lanes in each direction. Moreover, the Board believes that the tunnel options would be better for the AONB, as they are more successful at separating traffic, leading to less congestion. Additionally, the

Board thinks that tunnel options would offer a better solution for A436 users, singling out tunnel Option 3 as offering a better return on investment than Option 12.

- 6.3.30. The Cotswolds Conservation Board also notes that the benefit cost assessment scores fail to capture the public's willingness to pay for a tunnel option alongside the wider economic benefits of a tunnel option. The Board compares the tunnel options for the A417 scheme to those for the Stonehenge scheme, and claims that the A417 tunnel options offer better value.
- 6.3.31. The Board also states that A436 users would be disadvantaged by both options put forward. The Board expresses concern that Option 30 is not a good solution for the A436 user, as traffic coming from the A436 from the A40 would have to travel further over the new A417 to then travel back down the escarpment towards Gloucester.
- 6.3.32. In general terms, the Board says that the consultation only put forward one tangible option, as Option 12 was dismissed in favour of Option 30. The Board sees Option 12 as little more than an 'Aunt Sally' and claims that if Option 12 was dismissed in February 2017, it cannot be seen as adequately meeting the vision and design principles for the scheme.
- 6.3.33. The Board points out the "major junction implications" of Option 30, which would cause damage to the local landscape. In terms of environmental considerations, the Board raises concerns that the Government's 25-year Environment Plan has not been fully taken into account. The Board claims that the surface route options could compromise consideration of the Cotswolds as a potential National Park. The Board adds that a "net environmental gain" cannot be applied to the area if the A417 Missing Link is delivered with a surface route option.
- 6.3.34. The Cotswolds Conservation Board further questions the budget for the A417, highlighting that the original £250m budget would fail to cover any solutions that were likely to meet the agreed vision and design principles. The Board defines value for money as amounting to general UK well-being and expresses concern that the benefit to cost ratio assessment failed to capture the full range of environmental and social benefits of the different options. The Board recommends that the scheme needs to consider further value for money, accounting for the wider impact of the scheme and the national and international importance of the Cotswolds AONB.

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## Councils of Gloucestershire

- 6.3.35. The Councils of Gloucestershire jointly set out their unanimous and united support for the project. They feel the project would address the most important current gap in Gloucestershire's transport infrastructure, which results in daily harm to the economy, along with frequent traffic accidents, personal injury and loss of life.
- 6.3.36. The Councils support Highways England's preference for Option 30 and believe it offers the best balance in terms of safety, economics and the opportunity to find an environmentally positive solution in the sensitive landscape.

## Cowley & Birdlip Parish Council

- 6.3.37. Cowley & Birdlip Parish Council strongly supports Option 30, although notes some specific concerns:
- the route needs to be placed further away from Birdlip to provide a long-term solution to noise and pollution. Concerns over noise also applied to Stockwell and Cowley. Noise mitigation measures, including cut and cover tunnels and bund walls, were suggested as possible solutions
  - safety is a primary objective for the scheme and there is some concern that the existing A417 could be used as a local 'race track' due to the access needed for Stockwell Farm and the Golden Heart Inn
  - the junction arrangement for the A436 would increase congestion on local roads and suggested including an exit slip road at the top of Crickley Hill to mitigate this
  - minimising the impact on the AONB is important, including visual impact and conservation of local fauna and wildlife
- 6.3.38. Cowley & Birdlip Parish Council states that Option 12 fails to address key noise and pollution concerns and that the requirement for a 50mph speed limit would cause congestion during peak times.
- 6.3.39. Residents in the area who discussed the scheme with the Council had mixed view on tunnel options. Some felt tunnel portals for the shorter tunnel solutions would have an impact on nearby properties, whereas others expressed disappointment that a more detailed assessment of tunnel options was not carried out.
- 6.3.40. The Council believes there is opportunity for Option 30 to provide a legacy for the community by developing a 'Brown Sign' leisure amenity, such as a cycle/running/bridle path utilising the then redundant A417 carriageway.

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## Daglingworth Parish Council

- 6.3.41. Daglingworth Parish Council supports Option 30 as the preferred route option and understands the need for road improvements.
- 6.3.42. Daglingworth Parish Council expresses concern that any resulting increase in traffic using the A417 would have a detrimental effect on the parish. Particular concerns relate to the following:
- road surface noise
  - air pollution
  - use of village as a rat-run with damage to road surfaces, verges, boundary walls and street furniture
  - problems with rainwater running down the road into the village, with build-up of silt on the roads as well as entering property
- 6.3.43. Daglingworth Parish Council asks to see an Environmental Impact Assessment on the effect of the road improvements on the village as well as means to address the concerns raised.

## Environment Agency

- 6.3.44. The Environment Agency noted that an Environmental Impact Assessment and a Hydrogeological Impact Assessment would need to be carried out for the size of this scheme to ensure that any appropriate mitigation is put in place, particularly regarding the water environment. The Environment Agency believes this area is complex and poorly understood in hydrogeological terms and ground data needs to be collected from boreholes, wells, springs and river flows to improve understanding of and model the groundwater environment.
- 6.3.45. The Environment Agency states that both Option 12 and Option 30 cross over the principal aquifers of the Cotswold Jurassic limestone which are used for public drinking water, private water supplies and base flows to important watercourses and wetlands, including Bushley Buzzard SSSI. There are also a number of springs along the Cotswold escarpment and on the plateau top providing headwater springs to local watercourses.
- 6.3.46. Five main concerns were detailed about the two proposed routes, along with a number of specific features linked to Option 12 and Option 30. These can be summarised as follows:
- general impact of the road scheme on the water environment (quantity and quality)

- groundwater impact from road cuttings and effects of drawdown upon water features
- impact from barriers such as embankments, piling and foundations upon the water environment
- impact upon groundwater quality from drainage
- implication of the road scheme upon any wetlands and other designated sites where impacts are related to the water environment

6.3.47. Additional detail was requested on road drainage and what methods would be employed to discharge storm water off the carriageway. The Environment Agency notes that the A417 and notably the steeper section of Crickley Hill has a history of accidents and there is an opportunity for the proposals to contain accidental spillages from polluting the water environment with the use of interceptors.

6.3.48. The Environment Agency expects Highways England and its contractors to produce a Construction Environmental Management Plan which details all mitigation and environmental protection measures, identifying all sensitive receptors, general site management, monitoring, emergency procedures to protect the environment and any consent and permits required to operate and construct the scheme.

6.3.49. The Environment Agency believes this scheme provides an opportunity to provide for flood risk betterment and would advocate early consideration of this possibility.

### **Gloucestershire County Council**

6.3.50. Gloucestershire County Council welcomes the project and states that it considers the process undertaken by Highways England to deliver a solution that is professional, thorough and transparent.

6.3.51. Gloucestershire County Council states that the Missing Link is the top priority within its adopted Local Transport Plan. The Council believes a tunnel solution would be unaffordable and would present ecological challenges in a sensitive area and fully supports the development of a surface option.

6.3.52. The Council states its full support for Option 30 and, in the event that Option 12 is progressed, the Council confirms that it will support that option too.

- 6.3.53. The Council believes the project would make Gloucestershire's roads significantly safer, cut air pollution and remove a key obstacle to growing the Gloucestershire economy, protecting and increasing jobs in the area.
- 6.3.54. Gloucester County Council also requests that a long-standing issue on noise emitted by the concrete section of road surface on the A417/419 in the Cirencester area is addressed when the Missing Link scheme is progressed. The Council is concerned that additional traffic generated by the scheme would increase noise levels in this area.

### **Herefordshire Council**

- 6.3.55. Herefordshire Council supports Option 30 as it believes, from the information provided, that this option appears to present the best value for money and it is needed to enable free-flowing traffic at this location and address current safety concerns.

### **Hawling Parish Council**

- 6.3.56. Hawling Parish Council strongly supports Option 30 as the preferred option.
- 6.3.57. The Council feels that the maps used in the consultation were poor and all surrounding routes, including the existing A417, are too faint to see clearly. The Council also comments that there wasn't any information on how traffic from A436 Seven Springs, or other roads, would access the new routes.

### **Historic England**

- 6.3.58. Historic England has no preference for one route over the other, as they believe that both routes would cause harm. This is due to their potential to impact on a number of designated heritage assets and buried archaeology along the routes.
- 6.3.59. Historic England also states that once a preferred route is chosen, further work will need to be undertaken to better understand the environmental impact of the scheme. Historic England believes that the scheme chosen needs to improve setting where it can or mitigate potential harm through careful design and enhancements. Historic England expressed a desire to work closely with Highways England to protect the environment, mitigate the impact of the new road and make the most of potential opportunities the scheme creates.
- 6.3.60. Historic England is particularly concerned about the following sites:
- Crickley Hill (large cutting through the scarp slope and increase in vehicle movements could have a negative impact on Crickley Hill, generating increased road noise and pollution)
  - Birdlip/Peak Camp

- Emma's Grove (access is currently restricted through these three barrows as the public footpath through the site exits onto the A417)
- Cowley Manor
- Golden Heart Inn
- Crickley Hill Farmhouse Grade
- Milestone
- Shab Hill Barn
- Stockwell Deserted Medieval Village
- crop marks of Iron Age and Roman settlements
- World War II Signal Station at Shab Hill

- 6.3.61. Option 12 builds a new road in a deep cutting around the north side of Emma's Grove Barrows. Along this route, there is extensive undesignated archaeology and a 2006 report concluded that the route would cause an adverse impact on the significance of the monuments through a change in their setting.
- 6.3.62. Option 30 follows the same route as Option 12 around Emma's Grove Barrows in a deeper cutting but goes more directly to Cowley roundabout. Historic England is concerned that the deep cutting needed for both options would separate Emma's Grove Barrows from their landscape setting, as well as increase noise and pollution, causing additional harm to the setting and significance of the monuments.
- 6.3.63. Historic England wants to ensure the road design and associated infrastructure reflect the unique character and landscape of the Cotswolds through high quality design. It cites the A30 across Bodmin Moor and the A391 near St Austell as examples of well-designed roads. The new scheme should also ensure that landscape links are not lost through the new cutting and link roads. Land bridges at suitable locations are suggested as a means of achieving this.
- 6.3.64. Historic England states that further work along the preferred route needs to include:
- desk-based assessment of all heritage and designated assets along the route and within the corridor
  - geophysical surveys along the route of the new roads
  - targeted evaluation based on the geophysics results and blank areas within the survey area which will provide information on archaeological remains
  - assessment of the significance of the archaeological remains
- 6.3.65. Historic England has also identified opportunities to improve the significance and setting of the scheduled monuments:

- land bridge/s close to Emma's Grove to provide a landscape link for the monument
- funding of the publication of the excavations from Crickley Hill
- further investigation and improved management of Emma's Grove
- analysis and publication of archaeological material excavated from archaeological sites along the new road routes
- a commuted sum to go towards conservation bodies, like Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and The National Trust, for the management and maintenance of their heritage assets affected by the scheme

### **Latton Parish Council**

- 6.3.66. Latton Parish Council fully supports Option 30 and supports the improvements being proposed.
- 6.3.67. Latton Parish Council highlights an existing problem of excessive noise pollution, particularly along the concrete sections of the A419/417 between Latton and Daglingworth. Latton Parish Council is concerned that this would be exacerbated by an overall increase in traffic numbers generated by the new route, particularly given the 24-hour nature of traffic and possible increases in heavy goods vehicles, and feels this should be a consideration when setting noise criteria for the new route.

### **Natural England**

- 6.3.68. Natural England makes clear that it supports Option 30 over Option 12 but recognises the high environmental impact of both options. In terms of the four tunnel options, Natural England states its disappointment that none of these options were brought forward for public consultation.
- 6.3.69. Natural England sees Option 12 as the most damaging option, providing fewer opportunities for landscape mitigation and enhancement measures. It sees Option 30 as widening the impact of both the A417 and its ancillary roads. However, Option 30 is perceived as having more potential because of greater opportunities to enhance the local landscape and wider natural environment, lessening the impact of the new road. Natural England has requested that it is fully involved throughout the design process to ensure quick and smooth progression of the scheme.
- 6.3.70. Natural England has put forward the following access objectives for the scheme in order to prevent comprising the public rights of way network close to Air Balloon junction:

- to improve the public rights of way network in the area for all users: walkers, cyclists, equestrians and those with mobility disabilities
- the creation of formal crossing points which are grade-separated for users of the Cotswold Way National Trail and Gloucestershire Way long distance path
- for bridleways, dedicated equestrian crossings should be considered
- to increase the area of publicly accessible land and link Crickley Hill Country Park and Barrow Wake
- to consider providing a crossing point for the Cotswold Way via a green bridge

6.3.71. Natural England welcomes the recognition given to designated sites and advises that all sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) and European sites (Special Areas of Conservation) should be clearly identified in the context of any potential impact by the scheme. Natural England expects the following designated sites to be protected and where possible, enhanced:

- Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSI (of which HE owns a part)
- Bushley Muzzard, Brimpsfield SSSI
- Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC
- Cotswolds Commons and Beechwoods SSSI

6.3.72. Natural England would also welcome early discussion on the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and can offer further advice as policy options are progressed. It also states that green infrastructure should be incorporated into the scheme so that the development can help make a positive contribution to the Cotswolds AONB (area of outstanding natural beauty). Natural England has put forward the following objectives for the final scheme design:

- removal of all redundant infrastructure associated with the current route of the A417
- strengthening of existing landscape features to make sure the scheme meets the character of the landscape rather than the reverse
- locate the new carriageway to take full advantage of the natural screening provided by the topography of the area
- consideration of lighting technology and positioning of new roadside signage
- take account of potential hydrological impact

6.3.73. Natural England seeks measures to assess the impact of air quality on the natural environment and the aforementioned designated sites, particularly those within 200m of the proposal. One of the main issues to be considered is the additional nitrogen emissions as a result of increased traffic. Natural England

expects the scheme to reduce the risk of congestion and improve air quality in the surrounding area.

### **Swindon Borough Council**

- 6.3.74. Swindon Borough Council believes both route options would deliver benefits and the Council strongly supports the proposals to improve the A417.
- 6.3.75. Swindon Borough Council supports Highways England's view that Option 30 is the preferred option for the scheme, citing the following reasons:
- Option 30 can be delivered with less disruption to existing traffic during the construction phase, as much of the route can be built offline, whereas Option 12 would require construction activity along the length of the existing route, leading to greater disruption
  - Option 30 would provide more benefit in terms of reduced journey times, as it is shorter and can support a higher speed limit when compared to Option 12, which would impose a lower speed limit along a greater length of the route
  - provides better value for money

### **Syde Parish Council**

- 6.3.76. Syde Parish Council is broadly in favour of Option 30 as it is the most cost effective and has a safer bend at Air Balloon than Option 12.
- 6.3.77. Syde Parish Council wants to see a reduction in rat-running through the village, particularly because of the damage to verges and noise it creates. The Council requests noise abatement features are considered, whichever option is taken forward.
- 6.3.78. The Council is concerned about the safety of the junction onto the A417 at the Syde/Highwayman Inn turning and feels the junction should either be remodelled to include slip roads in both directions or a 50–60mph speed limit should be introduced at this point. A speed limit would have the added benefit of reducing noise and pollution.
- 6.3.79. Syde Parish Council feels this was a well organised consultation.

### **The Coal Authority**

- 6.3.80. The proposed development site is located outside the defined coalfield and, on this basis, the Coal Authority has made no specific comments.

### **Worcestershire County Council**

6.3.81. Worcestershire County Council strongly supports plans to invest in the A417, recognising that journey time unreliability along this critical corridor acts as a constraint to economic growth. The Council concurs with the assessment that Option 30 best tackles the objectives for the scheme, delivering strategic improvements to journey reliability, safety and economic growth and reducing the impact on the local natural and built environment.

## 6.4. Responses by non-statutory organisations and other groups

6.4.1. As set out in Chapter 3, a number of other organisations and groups were invited to take part in the public consultation on the scheme proposals, as listed in Appendix D. A total of eighteen non-statutory organisations and groups responded and are listed in Table 6.7 below. Some responses were received from groups not included in the list of invitees; these are also included in this section and section 6.5.

Table 6.7: Non-statutory organisations and groups responding to public consultation

Non-statutory organisations and groups responding to public consultation
BPE Solicitors
British Horse Society
Campaign for Better Transport
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Cycling Campaign
Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce
Cotswold Trails and Access Partnership
Cotswold Way Association
Endsleigh Insurance
GFirst LEP
Gloucestershire Local Access Forum
Gloucestershire Ramblers
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Misslink4horses Focus Group
Road Haulage Association Ltd
The National Trust
The Woodland Trust
Trail Riders Fellowship

6.4.1. The response of each organisation or group is summarised below, while the full response of each has been included in Appendix N. The matters raised are tabulated under the themes in Table 6.8 to Table 6.12 in section 6.5 below, along with Highways England's response.

### BPE Solicitors

- 6.4.2. BPE Solicitors supports Option 30 and feels there is a need for the new route to address a number of current concerns, including slow transport links to London and frequent delays on the A417, which is causing difficulties for businesses in the area.

### **British Horse Society and Misslink4horses focus group**

- 6.4.3. British Horse Society and Misslink4horses Focus Group prefer Option 30 as they feel this option provides a great opportunity for new horse-friendly crossings to be built, which would open up a number of horse-riding routes which are currently not used due to lack of safe crossing points across the A417. They feel there is also be an opportunity to use some of the old A417 as a route for riding.
- 6.4.4. British Horse Society and Misslink4horses Focus Group want to see adequate fencing or treeline to ensure that traffic and horses are completely separated where rights of way for horses cross or run alongside the new road. They note that horse riders prefer underpasses to overpasses and the Misslink4horses horse rider forum is aiming to come up with some views on crossings and to work with Highways England on this in the design phase.
- 6.4.5. British Horse Society and Misslink4horses Focus Group felt this was a very informative consultation session.

### **Campaign for Better Transport**

- 6.4.6. The Campaign for Better Transport objects to both route options, claiming they fail to meet the development test for construction within the AONB and for their heavy financial and environmental cost. It believes that the impact on the protected landscape, combined with a permanent loss of habitats, increased air and noise pollution and carbon emissions, means that the road plans should be rejected.
- 6.4.7. The Campaign for Better Transport is critical of the consultation process for not giving the public enough input to influence the outcome of the route selection process and for being a 'tick-box exercise' to allow Highways England to say it consulted with the public before it selected its preferred route. The group also claim that Highways England has a clear preferred route, with Option 12 as a previously rejected 'Aunt Sally' used to give "the pretence of choice".
- 6.4.8. The Campaign for Better Transport also states that the information provided as part of the consultation shows that all the options provided for the route would increase air pollution and carbon emissions, while generating additional traffic and longer travel distances. It also cites the poor cost benefit ratio for Option 30 and Option 12, and argues that tunnel options would produce some landscape and environmental improvements for the AONB and help address the negative

impact of the road. The group notes a tunnel option would provide the greatest benefits for non-motorised users, as any interaction with fast-moving traffic on the strategic road network would be completely removed.

- 6.4.9. The Campaign for Better Transport is particularly concerned that the scheme is proposed to take place within an AONB. It states that if Option 30 is approved, it would set a “dangerous precedent”, opening up naturally designated landscapes to further “damaging” developments. It also sees new road capacity as only a temporary solution to congestion. Increases in traffic levels resulting from the new road are cited as negatively impacting on roadside air quality and causing air pollution in surrounding towns and villages. The group advocates investment in improving the capacity for rail freight instead of constructing a new road and claims that little weight has been given to the landscape impact of the road proposals, contrary to national planning policy.

### **Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Gloucestershire**

- 6.4.10. The CPRE Gloucestershire branch commented that the consultation is fundamentally flawed, and this may lead to delay in finding the right scheme for the location.
- 6.4.11. The group sees Option 12 as deficient, offering poor value for money, minimal environmental benefits and only marginal improvements to traffic flows. Therefore, the CPRE sees Option 30 as the only option, which is inferior to its preferred Option 3. The CPRE prefers Option 3 for the following reasons:
- £105 million higher Present Value Benefits (PVB) compared with Option 30 (second highest benefits cost ratio of all the schemes)
  - minimises the number of new junctions
  - doesn't require a link road through a sensitive part of the AONB to accommodate the traffic from the A436 towards Gloucester
  - offers a less steep gradient and removes the need for a crawler lane up Crickley Hill
  - reduces traffic noise from vehicles climbing the escarpment
  - offers an easy wide green bridge at the Air Balloon
  - despite a later completion date, offers a lower take away of spoil (around 800,000m<sup>3</sup>) and less disruption to traffic during the construction period
- 6.4.12. The CPRE also claims that the approach and methodology used in the Government's 25-year Environment Plan, in particular the need to deliver wider public benefits and the use of natural capital accounting, used when previously assessing the Stonehenge tunnel, should have been used for this scheme. It

argues that if this approach had been used, there is a high probability that Option 3 gives the better value.

6.4.13. The CPRE states that Option 30 fails to meet two of the key objectives set out in the consultation brochure: namely, to reduce the environmental impact on the Cotswolds and to reduce queueing and improve access for local people. It believes that the scheme as presented would significantly damage the public's enjoyment of the AONB. The CPRE also notes that the scheme concentrates on the A417 user to the detriment of the A436 and other local road users.

6.4.14. The CPRE has put forward the following suggestions to improve Option 30:

- reinstate access to the lanes to Cowley and Brimpsfield or Nettleton Bottom with a new junction or near the existing Cowley roundabout
- sink the section of road at Stockwell Farm and the section of Cowley Lane which runs through it to preserve the ancient trees that run through this route. This would be instead of elevating the road to cross over Cowley Lane
- reduce visibility of the route, commencing the cutting towards Air Balloon 100m further south than proposed
- route A436 traffic going in the Gloucester direction via a slip road going north-west and link with the new A417 lower down on Crickley Hill; southbound A436 traffic could use the old A417 to the junction or near Cowley roundabout
- stop the removal of short stretches of the old A417 due to the lack of environmental benefit and to maintain access to Birdlip, Stockwell Farm and Nettleton Bottom
- a long section of cut and cover tunnel combining the green bridge concept (providing a landscape and wildlife link and a route for the Cotswold Way National Trail and the Gloucestershire Way) with the A436 crossing of the A417 is needed as a landscape solution
- lighting at the junctions should be avoided, or if considered absolutely necessary, should be limited to down lighting only

6.4.15. The CPRE stated a desire to work with Highways England to provide a scheme with a sensible balance between the natural capital of environmental protection and the purely economic benefits of improved traffic flows. It is happy to meet to explore options and possibilities.

### **Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Cycling Campaign**

6.4.16. Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Cycling Campaign prefers Option 30 to Option 12, adding that the route should include provision of a new shared use cycle/pedestrian track paralleling the route up the escarpment. This would provide safer pedestrian access up into the Cotswolds from Gloucester and

Cheltenham, as there are currently no suitable cycle routes up the escarpment from either Gloucester or Cheltenham.

- 6.4.17. Its preferred cycle route would start with a new grade-separated crossing at Crickleigh Farm to link Dog Lane and the public track on the opposite side of the existing A417, which alongside the existing underpass, would provide good cycle links into other minor roads towards Gloucester, the Witcombes and Bentham. The group recommends that from there the cycle route should parallel the new dual carriageway (with some separation and a raised earth barrier) until it connects with the minor road to Barrow Wake. It also suggests that the cycle route should use the same overall route to minimise costs and the gradient should be the same as the new A417 link road. The consultation response included a map to outline the proposals.

### **Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce**

- 6.4.18. Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce strongly supports Option 30 as the preferred option. It feels Option 12 is a reasonable 'reserve option' but it is not as good as Option 30. Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce believes that the proposed expansion of the region will increase pressures on the area and that it is vital for the local economy that these road improvements take place.

### **Cotswolds Trails and Access Partnership**

- 6.4.19. Irrespective of which route is taken forward, the Cotswolds Trails and Access Partnership is concerned about the integrity of the footpath and bridleway network and the physical safety of those using them. The Partnership notes the importance of the Gloucestershire Way and Cotswold Way, but also noted concerns about many other paths in the area, which are potentially impacted by the scheme.
- 6.4.20. The Cotswolds Trails and Access Partnership states that current proposals rule out the most environmentally sensitive options on the grounds of costs and believes tunnel options win out in terms of maintaining the integrity of the AONB landscape. It also notes that a tunnel option eliminates the effects of severe weather, including ice and snow.

### **Cotswold Way Association**

- 6.4.21. Cotswold Way Association does not support either of the options put forward for consultation and believes they are ill-considered and an attempt to drive through the cheapest possible solution. It believes that one of the discarded tunnel options should be re-considered.

- 6.4.22. Cotswold Way Association believes that the Cotswold Way National Trail would be severely impacted by both route options. It states its specific concerns as:
- the route of the Cotswold Way National Trail and other walking routes may be affected
  - impact on the landscape around the Cotswold Way, particularly where the trail crosses the valley at Air Balloon roundabout
  - effects the routes would have on historic and protected landscapes, including Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSI and the scheduled monuments of Emma's Grove and Crickley Hill Camp. The Association believes that both route options would sever the link between the two SSSI areas
- 6.4.23. Cotswold Way Association considers that it would be unacceptable to leave any unnecessary tarmac and concrete in place, particularly as it would widen the zone of impact just where the Cotswold Way crosses the valley. It would like to see proposals for the restitution of the land along the present line of the road.
- 6.4.24. Cotswold Way Association would like clarification on what protection the area will have, the restitution of the surroundings and the maintenance of the walking route. In particular, it set out that it wants:
- the Cotswold Way National Trail to remain open to walkers throughout the works and, when realigned, to be on a safe and aesthetically pleasing route which is no less commodious than the present route
  - intersections with other long-distance routes and paths to be kept in place and any closures to be temporary, with closure and reopening dates clearly defined as early as possible

### **Endsleigh**

- 6.4.25. As a Cheltenham employer, Endsleigh supports development of the A417 and Option 30. Endsleigh believes improved infrastructure would benefit the accessibility of the area, increase specialist recruitment catchment areas, reduce accidents and reduce lengthy commute times. These improvements would benefit business in the region and improve colleague well-being.

### **GFirst LEP**

- 6.4.26. GFirst LEP supports Option 30 as it believes it provides the safest option and presents the best opportunities for environmental enhancement (in the Nettleton Bottom to Birdlip section).
- 6.4.27. GFirst LEP feels any impact of a potential slight increase in background noise levels on the communities of Stockwell and Cowley is outweighed by the

benefits to the much larger community of Birdlip and the reduction in rat-running through Brimpsfield.

- 6.4.28. It also believes Option 30 would be significantly less disruptive than Option 12 during the construction phase, which is a major consideration from an economic impact point of view.
- 6.4.29. GFirst LEP believes the 'green bridge' to link the Cotswold Escarpment across the new road should be considered as an integral part of the scheme and not a 'nice to have'. It feels the bridge should, as far as possible, be designed as an aesthetic feature in its own right and that high-quality design should be an intrinsic part of the scheme.
- 6.4.30. GFirst LEP believes the scheme should make provision for using designated funds to deliver enhancements to the local communities/areas of interest that have been or would be impacted by the A417. GFirst LEP also suggests some provision, such as signage and access, to ensure the ongoing viability of the Golden Heart Inn as an important community asset, as it may be at risk of losing passing trade.

### **Gloucestershire Local Access Forum**

- 6.4.31. Gloucestershire Local Access Forum reports that the views of its members vary significantly but, on aggregate, they are neutral over the two options. There is a consensus that the project should be landscape led which, the members believe, would suggest that a tunnel should have been the proposed option. However, one member feels that the timescale for tunnels is longer than the surface route and that tunnels end in unsightly portals.
- 6.4.32. Gloucestershire Local Access Forum states that Option 12 disrupts fewer non-motorised routes than Option 30 and that Option 12 has a lower impact on undisturbed countryside as the route closely follows the line of the current route.
- 6.4.33. Gloucestershire Local Access Forum considers landscape as a valuable asset which creates tourism and recreation, and the surface routes would degrade that landscape value and potentially sever recreational connections. It feels connectivity, both recreational and for wildlife, should be paramount to whichever option is taken forward, and that the new road must not be permitted to allow dead-end public rights of way to be created through ill-thought through design. Gloucestershire Local Access Forum does not feel there has been consideration for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders who currently use the A417 and suggests a physically separated cycle lane should be provided which would also be available to walkers and horse riders. Gloucestershire Local Access Forum believes the project has the potential to create and enhance non-motorised user routes to deliver a positive impact on physical activity and well-being.

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## Gloucestershire Ramblers Association

- 6.4.34. Gloucestershire Ramblers Association is rejecting both surface options and its preference is for tunnel Option 3. It states that this would leave the Cotswold Way and Gloucestershire Way in much quieter surroundings at the Air Balloon.
- 6.4.35. The Association states that as the project is described as 'landscape led' it would suggest that tunnel options would have ranked higher. The Association considers that this is a one-off opportunity to pursue the best option for the AONB and that attempts should be made to secure adequate funding for a tunnel option if it works best in the landscape.
- 6.4.36. The Association feels that footpaths should not be severed by the road and adequate crossings should be provided.
- 6.4.37. Gloucestershire Ramblers considers that both Options 12 and 30 are effectively the same from Brockworth to Air Balloon. The Association felt that the fly-through presentation showing arrangements around Air Balloon was confusing.
- 6.4.38. The Association disagrees with demolishing the pub as the group considers it as part of the character of the area and a popular place for families and walkers. Instead, it suggests that one of the surface route options could include a green bridge or short tunnel to keep the pub in place.
- 6.4.39. Gloucestershire Ramblers disagrees most strongly with Option 30 as the group feels it does little to show any benefit to footpaths or the countryside, describing it as an example of dual carriageway to take traffic across the AONB from one side to the other. It feels the access arrangement to the A436 increases the impact on the countryside by including a link road with roundabouts and slip roads at each end.
- 6.4.40. Gloucestershire Ramblers believes that Option 12 has an advantage over Option 30 as it doesn't affect open countryside east of Shab Hill, but believes the speed limits, average speed cameras and number of junctions outlined in the Highways England report makes it untenable. Without further detail on footpaths and the countryside, the Association is unable to support it.
- 6.4.41. Gloucestershire Ramblers has presented an adaptation to Option 30, in which it treats the route in the same way as a tunnel. The simplified proposal includes:
- cutting the new A417 slightly below surface to reduce traffic noise, with level bridges over for footpath
  - deleting the cross link to save the countryside and money and including slips onto the new A417 at Air Balloon

- a green bridge (short tunnel) below the pub and retaining the Cotswold and Gloucestershire Ways on their present alignment

6.4.42. The Association considers its adaptations should be subjected to a costing analysis, although it also feels there may be further benefit in adjusting the length and/or location of the tunnel.

### **Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust**

6.4.43. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is disappointed that one of the tunnel options did not make it to the public consultation and feels that insufficient weight was given to the sensitive nature of the landscape and environment when the Early Assessment and Sifting Tool was applied. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust accepts the need to improve the existing road but does not believe the route options presented for consultation reflect the vision for a scheme that is appropriate within the AONB.

6.4.44. Despite its concerns about the lack of a tunnel option in the consultation, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust provided responses to the options presented, commenting on biodiversity, in line with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's organisational focus. Of the two routes, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust prefers Option 30 on the grounds that it minimises the impact on high biodiversity value sites and provides greater opportunity for delivering net gain for biodiversity.

6.4.45. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust believes that the new junction at Barrow Wake for Option 12 would bring traffic very close to the SSSI and would restrict opportunities for extending the unimproved limestone grassland habitat at the site.

6.4.46. The opportunity presented by Option 30 for part of the A417 between the Birdlip turn-off and Stockwell turn-off to be downgraded provides an opportunity for habitat restoration.

6.4.47. The proposed green bridge put forward for both options is welcomed by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and would help meet two of the Trust's principles in relation to the scheme, namely net biodiversity gain and restored habitat connectivity – as well as enhancing amenity value. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's initial assessment is that 50 metres would not be wide enough to deliver these benefits for people and wildlife.

6.4.48. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust would like any landscaping and planting for the scheme to prioritise natural colonisation. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust would like the scheme to consider the provision of new areas for recreation, in addition to that provided for habitat creation and connectivity, to help divert visitor

pressure away from sensitive sites such as Leckhampton Hill, Crickley Hill and the Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods.

## National Trust

- 6.4.49. National Trust agrees that the A417 is currently unable to accommodate the volume of traffic, causing congestion and associated problems such as air pollution, and accepts the need for a solution to address these issues. It notes, however, that in the National Policy Statement for National Networks, there is a strong presumption against a significant building of new roads in protected landscapes, such as AONBs, unless it can be shown that there are compelling reasons, with the benefits outweighing the costs "very significantly". In light of this, National Trust considers it essential that the proposed scheme is genuinely 'landscape led' and supports the emphasis on this in the vision statement. National Trust also stresses the importance of protecting the views and settings of heritage assets and bringing about substantial benefits for the Cotswolds landscape and environment.
- 6.4.50. National Trust expresses disappointment that a tunnel option is not part of the current consultation proposals and states its current position as opposing a surface route scheme due to the significant and detrimental impact on landscape and heritage assets.
- 6.4.51. Given Option 12 was previously discounted, National Trust does not see why this route was presented again for consultation and does not feel it can support it as proposed.
- 6.4.52. As Option 12 offers poorer return on investment than the shortest tunnel option, National Trust believes that a tunnel option should have formed part of the consultation to enable the range of options and their merits to be fully considered.
- 6.4.53. National Trust does not consider the two options put forward for consultation to be acceptable in their current design and identifies a number of mitigations that it feels would be necessary for a surface option to be acceptable, but does not feel that it has seen enough evidence that they could be delivered within the current budgetary constraints.
- 6.4.54. National Trust is extremely concerned about the scale of new infrastructure being proposed within the AONB landscape for both options, which it feels would affect the setting of Crickley Hill. It does not believe there are sufficient measures to reduce or mitigate the likely impact and offer environmental improvements. It feels that the impact would be greater with Option 12 as it is longer than Option 30.

6.4.55. National Trust raises the following issues and concerns about Option 30:

- the loss of land and resulting habitat loss. National Trust wants to understand the potential for an equivalent amount of new habitat and would expect the scheme to aim for an increase in biodiversity and specifically a net gain in calcareous grassland
- the removal of trees and impact on the visual setting of Crickley Hill, Barrow Wake and the wider Cotswolds landscape and the increase in noise at key public locations. National Trust would expect significant replanting
- the landscaping and planning for cuttings. National Trust wants the scheme to avoid concrete infrastructure and place lighting to be as sympathetic as possible to the landscape
- National Trust feels there is insufficient information available to understand the impact of junctions and link roads or to assess the visual, noise and setting impact for Crickley Hill and between Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake
- future proofing the capability of the road scheme and integration with the local network. National Trust feels there needs to be more evidence that commuter traffic would be managed to avoid rat-running through the local road network

6.4.56. National Trust believes Option 30 has less impact on Emma's Grove Scheduled Monument and, given its shorter length, is likely to have less impact on unknown archaeology. It would like further assessments on likely impact and on the severance of current walking routes between sites. It believes it will be important not to neglect the heritage significance and to show evidence of how sites can be reconnected.

6.4.57. National Trust also expresses concern that the full costs of delivering an acceptable scheme, including the detailed design, mitigation and environment enhances that it believes necessary, may not be incorporated within the current budget.

6.4.58. National Trust proposes a number of measures, which it believes, are necessary to make the scheme acceptable. These include:

- a commitment to enrich and enhance the existing calcareous grassland and to identify and nurture new areas of calcareous grassland
- a net gain for well-managed land under wildlife or habitat conservation
- improvements to habitat connectivity
- improvements to public access between Cotswold Way and Gloucestershire Way across the A417 between Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake

- 6.4.59. National Trust is pleased to see the provision for a green bridge to link the Crickley Hill landscape to that of Barrow Wake but considers the 50 metres width to be significantly below the level of mitigation and enhancement necessary.
- 6.4.60. It feels the five lanes of traffic and, as in Option 12, a broad central reservation, would be an impossible barrier to wildlife and people and that a landscape link would need to be of significant width to overcome this. National Trust strongly advocates more than one bridge, substantially wider than that proposed.
- 6.4.61. It feels a substantial landscape link would provide many benefits, including reducing the visual impact of the road, reducing traffic noise and creating a route for the public between the Cotswold Way and the wider landscape. It would also benefit wildlife and, with the right planting, would allow a range of species to move over the reconnected landscape.

### **Road Haulage Association**

- 6.4.62. The Road Haulage Association supports Option 30 as the preferred route option and believes the route improvements need to be made as quickly as possible.
- 6.4.63. The Road Haulage Association prefers Option 30 because journey times are improved, and, despite the sharp bend, higher speed can be maintained. It also feels that the construction of Option 30 would be less disruptive.
- 6.4.64. Option 12 is longer and would have longer journey times at a lower speed and increased fuel cost.
- 6.4.65. The Road Haulage Association also believes that shorter, free-flowing routes improve air quality.

### **Woodland Trust**

- 6.4.66. Woodland Trust objects to both route options on the grounds of the loss of a veteran apple tree.
- 6.4.67. The Trust believes the proposals contravene local and national planning and biodiversity policies, namely:
- National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 118
  - The National Policy Statement for National Networks, paragraph 5.32
  - Cotswold District Council's Local Plan (2011): Policy 100: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
  - Highways England's Biodiversity Action Plan (2016)
- 6.4.68. The Woodland Trust believes that an alternative option should be found.

## **6.5. Matters raised by statutory bodies and non-statutory organisations and groups with Highways England's response**

- 6.5.1. Table 6.8 to Table 6.12 present the matters raised by both statutory bodies and non-statutory organisations and groups, with Highways England's response to them. Each table categorises the matters raised under the identified themes listed in section 4.4. Comments that simply endorse the scheme proposals are not included in the table.

Table 6.8: Matters raised by stakeholders (Question 1 - To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?)

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Alternative proposals	Comments outlining preference for a tunnel option, rather than a surface route.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link. All shortlisted tunnel options would have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would also need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape, increasing these impacts. When the benefits of tunnel options were weighed against their significant cost, they did not offer value for money for taxpayers and were not taken forward to consultation.
	Option 30 should include a slip road at Air Balloon roundabout, to allow traffic to exit towards Cheltenham and the A436.	The topography of the landscape surrounding Air Balloon roundabout means that any slip roads in this location would not meet highways safety standards. As such, this proposal is not feasible.
	Option 30 should have a junction at Cowley roundabout, in order to facilitate access to Cowley and Brimpsfield.	Further assessment will be carried out to determine whether an additional junction at the existing Cowley roundabout would offer benefits.
	The new A417 should be sunk into a cutting and pass under Cowley Lane, instead of over it, preserving the natural beauty in this location and the ancient trees that line the road.	These proposals would require a significant quantity of additional earthworks, causing visual intrusion to the landscape. Extending the cutting would increase the cost of Option 30 above the maximum cost range for the scheme, without providing sufficient additional benefits.
	The cutting at Shab Hill should continue further south to reduce the prominence of the route in this location.	
	The Shab Hill to Barrow Wake link road should be removed from Option 30 and slip roads should be added at Cowley roundabout and Air Balloon roundabout.	The topography of the area means that slip roads at Air Balloon and at Cowley roundabout would not meet road safety standards. The junction at Shab Hill has been identified as the most suitable location in the landscape to provide the necessary access to the strategic road network. Further assessment will be carried out to determine whether an additional junction at the existing Cowley roundabout would offer benefits.
Alternative proposals	The proposed green bridge in Option 30 should be replaced with a cut and cover tunnel; this would provide a better landscape solution and would reduce traffic noise in the area.	A provision for building a green bridge in the vicinity of Air Balloon roundabout has been included in the cost estimate for Option 30 to improve connectivity between the habitats at the Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSI, which are currently severed by the existing A417.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		Additional cut and cover tunnels along the route of Option 30 would increase the project costs above the maximum cost range without offering sufficient additional benefits to be considered value for money.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Cultural Heritage and Special Scientific Interest	Concern about the impact of Option 30 on the countryside, particularly with the inclusion of the link road between Shab Hill and Barrow Wake.	Highways England fully recognises the sensitive landscape of the Cotswolds and has carried out environmental assessments and studies to understand how the landscape could accommodate the proposed route options. Highways England has met with representatives from environmental groups, statutory agencies and local authorities to discuss opportunities for enhancing the landscape in this area and will continue to work closely with them to identify and include measures to reduce any adverse effects the scheme may have. Further details will be presented in the next stage of consultation.
	Concern about the scale of new highways infrastructure being proposed within the AONB landscape. Includes concern about the effect on Crickley Hill's landscape, heritage and ecological assets.	
	The scheme does not sufficiently recognise the sensitivity of the Cotswolds AONB and Highways England's statutory duty to protect and enhance its natural beauty.	
	Option 30 fails in the key objective to reduce the impact on the landscape and enhance the surrounding environment where possible.	
	The design of Option 30 should include landscape remediation to mitigate the visual impact of the route.	
Further landscape impact assessment work is needed and should include an assessment of the accessibility of historic sites and the connectivity between them.	During the route options sifting process, Option 30 was measured against the scheme objectives, including landscape and environmental factors. Highways England will continue to develop landscape and environmental mitigation as an integral part of the scheme's development.	
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Cultural Heritage and Special Scientific Interest	The design of Option 30 should include landscape remediation to mitigate the visual impact of the route.	Highways England will incorporate mitigation measures into the design to keep any visual impact to a minimum.
	Further landscape impact assessment work is needed and should include an assessment of the accessibility of historic sites and the connectivity between them.	Highways England will undertake assessments on the landscape, heritage, accessibility and wider environmental impact throughout the future stages of the design development of Option 30.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Cultural Heritage and Special Scientific Interest	A minimum amount of overhead signage should be used so as not to impact the AONB.	Road sign design and placement will be assessed at future stages of the scheme's development. All signage will be designed to meet highways safety standards and consideration will be given to minimising any visual impact on the AONB where possible.
	Support for Option 30 because it has greater opportunities to enhance the landscape and improve the visual amenity and would divert the A417 from the escarpment edge.	This is an anticipated benefit of Option 30 and has been considered in the selection of the preferred route.
Construction	The installation of site compounds could be managed in such a way to present an opportunity for the future, such as parking or visitor facilities for the area.	This will be reviewed as a possible opportunity at future stages of the scheme's development.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Support for Option 30 on the basis that it would cause less disruption to traffic during construction, particularly as it is off-line from the existing route.	This is an anticipated benefit of Option 30 and has been considered in the selection of the preferred route.
Consultation process	The fly-through video is confusing because of the way it depicts arrangements at Air Balloon roundabout.	These comments are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next consultation stage and ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.
	The junctions and associated link roads are not well represented or explained in the route visualisations.	
Economic	Concern about Option 30 receiving a low score for landscape monetisation.	As described in the Technical Appraisal Report, the surface routes performed worse than tunnel routes, but, because the design is at too early a stage to include landscape mitigation measures, the study has not formed part of the core assessment and appraisal of the options. The landscape monetisation study was undertaken for comparative purposes to ensure a holistic understanding of the possible impact of the shortlisted scheme options.
Economic	Concern that potential depreciation in value of farmland was not captured in the cost calculations for the scheme.	The effects of the scheme's construction on land value in the surrounding area has not been included in the economic impact calculations at this point in the scheme's development. Highways England will review the need for this assessment as part of the scheme's development. Although depreciation in the value of agricultural land is possible, it is anticipated that journey time reductions would have inflationary effects on residential and commercial property prices in the surrounding area.
	Support for Option 30 on the basis of the higher cost effectiveness/value for money.	This is an anticipated benefit of Option 30 and has been considered in the selection of the preferred route.
Engineering	Concern about the gradient of the A417 on Crickley Hill being double the desirable maximum for dual carriageways in Option 30.	The reduction in gradient to 7.5% would be a significant improvement over the existing route. In work following the public consultation the gradient has been further reduced to 7%. The topography of Crickley Hill limits how much further the gradient could be reduced on Option 30 route and reducing it significantly further would increase the size of the cutting at the top of the hill, increasing the environmental impact and increasing costs above the maximum budget set for the scheme. Building three traffic lanes uphill (two lanes plus an additional climbing lane) would help traffic flow freely up the steep gradient, improving safety and reducing pollution.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Upcoming developments in transport technology (such as electric/hybrid vehicles) should be considered as part of assessment of the proposed gradients on Crickley Hill.	Highways England anticipates no impact on driveability. The expected trend towards electric or hybrid vehicles has been taken into account in the scheme design, and in the air quality and greenhouse gas emission modelling.
	Concrete infrastructure should be avoided where possible.	The choice of construction materials will be made during future stages of the scheme's design and the impact on the visual amenity of the area will be taken into account.
	Concern about the performance of Option 30 in the EAST and EAST Plus analysis.	The EAST Plus analysis was part of a wider assessment of all the options against a number of factors, including the scheme's objectives, road safety and traffic. When viewed alongside value for money and affordability criteria, these factors gave a holistic view of the merits of each option, which informed the selection of Option 30 for non-statutory consultation and, ultimately, as the preferred route for developing this scheme.
Environment	Concern about increased noise where the route runs closer to Stockwell and Cowley. Noise mitigation measures should be provided in these areas, such as cut and cover tunnels, bund walls, and low noise surfacing.	Concerns about the audial and visual impact of Option 30 were considered in its appraisal and selection as the preferred route. Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the design at future stages to keep any adverse effects to a minimum.
	Concern about the audial and visual impact of the proposed five lanes of traffic on Crickley Hill.	
	Concern about the existing concrete surfaced stretch of the A417/419 between Latton and Daglingworth. The Missing Link improvements would increase traffic along this corridor and the scheme should include the resurfacing of this section of road. The Environment Fund could be used for this.	Current levels of traffic are expected to increase regardless of whether the scheme is constructed. The analysis of the scheme accepts that it would cause an increase in traffic, and the impact of the scheme on related roads in its assessment. Highways England will continue to assess this in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact, where possible. However, while the A417 route is likely to become busier, noise assessments do not suggest there would be a significant increase in noise along the corridor. The section of A417/419 between Latton and Daglingworth will be monitored as part of Highways England's ongoing road maintenance programme. The existing surface will be replaced when it is near or at the end of its life. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	It does not appear that the potential removal of the short section of the A417, between the B4070 junction and the Stockwell junction, would be of much environmental benefit.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report and consultation booklet, there is an opportunity under Option 30 to remove nearly a mile of the existing A417. This would open up a significant area of land for ecological and environmental improvement. The merits of this will be considered further in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment.
Environment	<p>General concern about the impact of the scheme on local flora and fauna, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mitigation for the scheme should take habitat loss into account across the whole length of the new road (includes specific mention of Crickley Hill), including fringe infrastructure and build disturbance</li> <li>new woodlands and habitat should be planted as part of the proposals, to promote the establishment and conservation of local wildlife</li> <li>significant replanting should be undertaken to replace any loss of trees along new sections of the road, with particular attention given to native species in the local area</li> <li>the scheme should aim for an increase in biodiversity and a significant net gain in calcareous grassland. Includes a comment that the proposed cutting should be planted with calcareous grassland species</li> </ul>	<p>A key objective for the scheme is to reduce the impact on the landscape and the environment. The concerns raised here about effects on woodlands, habitats and wildlife will be carefully considered in the next stage of the design. Highways England will continue to work closely with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to develop appropriate mitigation measures and ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.</p>
	Option 30 runs close to a groundwater source protection zone.	
	Option 30 is located within a Water Framework Directive 'Drinking Water Protected Area'.	
	Concern that the proposed cutting on Crickley Hill could interfere with shallow groundwater flows, cutting off some local springs.	
	Concern that the proposed cutting could alter natural water flows through aquifers, and potentially dewater the limestone aquifer formations locally.	
		<p>Matters raised about the potential impact of Option 30 on the local water environment will be considered throughout the future development of the scheme. Highways England is carrying out detailed surveys of surface and ground water sources and will work with the relevant statutory agencies to incorporate any mitigation measures into the design of Option 30, where appropriate.</p>

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<p>Concern about the impact of the Shab Hill junction on watercourses in this location.</p> <p>The scheme should address the severance between Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake in terms of ecology and the landscape.</p>	<p>A provision for building a green bridge in the vicinity of Air Balloon roundabout has been included in the cost estimate for Option 30 to improve connectivity between the habitats at the Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSI, which are currently severed by the existing A417. More details will be presented during future stages of consultation.</p>
Environment	<p>Objection to Option 30 on the grounds of the loss of a veteran apple tree, located adjacent to the Air Balloon pub car park.</p>	<p>Environmental surveys will be carried out to provide a comprehensive picture of the flora and fauna potentially affected by the scheme. Mitigation measures will be developed at future stages of the scheme's design.</p>
	<p>The minimum amount of lighting should be used along the scheme. Where this is not possible, highly directional lighting should be used.</p>	<p>As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, street lighting is not proposed on the mainline route of Option 30 but may be installed at the proposed new junctions. A safety assessment of the benefits of street lighting at selected junctions will be carried out as part of the scheme's future development, and more details will be presented during the next stage of public consultation.</p>
	<p>The placement of lighting on junctions should be sympathetic to the landscape and, where possible, within highways design standards. Includes comment that lighting at junctions should be avoided but, if deemed essential, they should be limited to down lighting only.</p>	
	<p>Given that this option has been assessed as having a 'large adverse' impact on the landscape, a firmer commitment to landscape and environmental mitigation measures would have been beneficial at this stage, to address fears that these might be discounted later.</p>	<p>Highways England will carry out further surveys and design work on the preferred route, and comments received as part of this non-statutory consultation will help inform the design of these mitigation measures with close liaison with the relevant statutory agencies. More details will be presented during the next stage of public consultation.</p>
Environment	<p>Support for the downgrading/removal of the existing A417 between the Stockwell and Birdlip junctions.</p>	<p>These are some of the anticipated benefits of Option 30 and have been considered in the selection of the preferred route.</p>
	<p>Support for Option 30 on the basis that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it would place the route further from Birdlip</li> <li>• it provides the best opportunities for environmental enhancement</li> <li>• it would leave land for habitat creation between the old road and new road</li> <li>• it provides greater potential to deliver a net gain for biodiversity</li> </ul>	

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Land requirements	Concern about the area of land locked between the new route, the proposed Shab Hill–Barrow Wake link road, and the existing A417; this would affect the usability and value of the land for agriculture. Includes suggestion that the land could be an opportunity for mitigation.	Highways England will continue to work with landowners to understand the impacts and will review possible opportunities as the engineering, environmental and landscape mitigation designs are progressed for Option 30.
Legacy	Existing public rights of way should be maintained, and none should be severed by the new road.	Maintaining connectivity to and between rights of way and overcoming severance of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders is a key objective of the scheme and will continue to be a key consideration in the further development of the route design. Highways England’s Cycling Strategy seeks to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport through the development of an integrated, comprehensive and high quality cycling network, including facilities that are safe and separate from traffic. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council, which is responsible for the improvement of local rights of way, to assess and agree how footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways can be maintained and to identify opportunities for improvements to routes for non-motorised users. More details will be presented during the next stage of public consultation.
	Concern that Option 30 does not appear to be beneficial to footpaths.	
	The scheme should maintain and improve the walking connections to and from the Crickley Hill Scheduled Monument. Includes comments that the scheme should address the severance between Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake for non-motorised users.	
	Option 30 should include provision for a new shared use cycle/pedestrian track parallel to the route up the escarpment, between Dog Lane and Shab Hill.	
	A grade-separated crossing should be installed for non-motorised users linking Dog Lane with the existing public right of way on the south side of the A417, to the west of Flyup 417.	
The scheme should include a crossing at Grove Farm between the existing bridleway and the path on the north side of the A417.		
Need	Comments that the improvements are vital for the region and would improve the local economy, access, productivity and air quality, while reducing environmental impact. Includes supportive comments by local businesses that the scheme would increase the catchment area for recruitment and improve travel for employees and partners.	The strategic road network plays an important role in the national economy. An improved and efficient strategic road network will maintain competitiveness and help the economy to grow. Without investment in the A417 Missing Link, the existing congestion on the strategic road network caused by the single carriageway sections will worsen and potentially constrain economic development. The Government’s Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. An important part of the Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment in the south west to

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed Option 30?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		boost economic growth in the region, including provision for upgrading the A417 Missing Link, recognising the importance of the route to the local economy.
Traffic and transport	Concern about traffic volume and future capacity of the A417 junctions and link road between Shab Hill and Barrow Wake. Includes concern that localised rat-running may still take place during commuting hours.	The traffic forecasting for the scheme has shown that the junction and link road arrangement for Option 30 would be sufficient to accommodate future traffic movements between the A417 and the local network. It is expected that the reduction in journey times would significantly reduce rat-running in the area.
	The scheme concentrates on A417 users and doesn't offer a sensible solution for A436 users. Includes concern that the improvement of the A417 would cause delays on the A436.	As part of the strategic road network, which Highways England is responsible for, the focus of the scheme is on improving the A417 Missing Link. The impact on users of the A436 has been taken into account as part of assessment work and users of the A436 would benefit from reduced queueing and more reliable journey times to a number of destinations.
	Concern that the old A417 would become a 'local race track' following the implementation of the new route.	The A417 would be subject to the national speed limit with appropriate enforcement, whether by the local constabulary or by cameras or passive measures. The road safety assessments and audits to inform this will be undertaken at future stages of the scheme's development.
	Support for Option 30 on the basis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved traffic flow</li> <li>• increase in safety</li> <li>• a significant reduction in journey times and fuel costs</li> <li>• a reduction in rat-running through local areas</li> </ul>	These are some of the anticipated benefits of Option 30 and have been considered in the selection of the preferred route.

Table 6.9: Matters raised by stakeholders (Question 2 - Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?)

Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	Concern about the scale of new highway infrastructure being proposed within the AONB landscape, amplified by the increased length of Option 12. Includes concern about the effect on Crickley Hill's landscape, heritage and ecological assets.	Highways England fully recognises the sensitive landscape of the Cotswolds and has carried out environmental assessments and studies to understand how the landscape could accommodate the proposed route options. Highways England has met with representatives from environmental groups, statutory agencies and local authorities to discuss opportunities for enhancing the landscape in this area and will continue to work closely with them to identify and include measures to reduce any adverse effects the scheme may have. Further details will be presented in the next stage of consultation.
	Concern that Option 12 would direct traffic too close to Barrow Wake SSSI.	
	Concern that Option 12 provides fewer opportunities for landscape mitigation and enhancement measures.	
	Support for Option 12 on the basis that it would affect less open countryside east of Shab Hill.	
Construction	Concern that Option 12 would cause significant disruption to traffic during construction and knock-on effects to productivity and the economy.	Construction methods, phasing and methodology will be developed in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. Highways England will work to ensure that construction is carried out as efficiently as possible with the aim of minimising traffic disruption.
Consultation process	The fly-through video is confusing in the way it depicts arrangements at Air Balloon roundabout.	These comments are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next consultation stage and ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.
Consultation process	A tunnel option (such as Option 3) should have been given more consideration and should have formed part of the non-statutory consultation, instead of Option 12.	The Technical Appraisal Report presented the assessment that was undertaken on the shortlisted options prior to the consultation. Options 12 and 30 were assessed and presented the best opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and were the only two options within the allocated cost range for the scheme. It would not be appropriate to consult on other options that had been discounted.
	Option 12 should not have been taken forward to consultation given it was previously dismissed.	
	Option 12 appears to have been included in the consultation only to make Option 30 look better.	

Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		As outlined in the consultation materials, Option 12 was assessed to meet the scheme's objectives and affordability criteria, hence it was taken forward to the non-statutory consultation.
Economic	Option 12's lower return on investment means it is not a reasonable alternative to Option 30.	This was considered in the selection of Option 30 as the preferred route.
	Option 12 is poorer value for the taxpayer than the shortest tunnel and should not have been progressed to this stage.	The Technical Appraisal Report presented the assessment that was undertaken on the shortlisted options prior to the consultation. Options 12 and 30 were assessed and presented the best opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and were the only two options within the allocated cost range for the scheme. It would not be appropriate to consult on other options that had been discounted.
Engineering	Concern that Option 12's steep gradient and sharper bend would compromise safety and cause more accidents.	While a mandatory 50mph speed limit would be necessary to manage safety on the tight bend in the alignment of Option 12, the capacity of this section of highway would be adequate to accommodate forecasted levels of traffic flow. One of the benefits of Option 30 is that the route could safely accommodate a 70mph speed limit.
	Option 12 is untenable with its potential speed limit and cameras.	
	Option 12 has too many junctions.	The traffic assessment studies show that two new junctions would be required to manage future traffic movements between the A417 and the local road network. Removing one or both of them would have significant implications due to the severance of routes from the strategic road network.
Environment	Option 12 would increase the speed and volume of traffic along the route's current line, resulting in higher noise levels for residents in Birdlip.	Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and would bypass Birdlip completely. The existing A417 in this area would only be used by local traffic, reducing traffic levels significantly.
	Concern about the existing concrete surfaced stretch of the A417/419 between Latton and Daglingworth. The Missing Link improvements would increase traffic along this corridor and the scheme should include the resurfacing of this section of road. The Environment Fund could be used for this.	Current levels of traffic are expected to increase regardless of whether the scheme is constructed. The analysis of the scheme accepts that it would cause an increase in traffic, and the impact of the scheme on related roads in its assessment. Highways England will continue to assess this in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact, where possible.. However, while the A417 route is likely to become busier, noise assessments do not suggest there would be a significant increase in noise along the corridor.

Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		The section of A417/419 between Latton and Daglingworth will be monitored as part of Highways England's ongoing road maintenance programme. The existing surface will be replaced when it is near or at the end of its life. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.
	Option 12 would restrict the opportunity for extending the unimproved limestone grassland habitat through habitat creation.	Option 30 has been selected as the preferred route and there is an opportunity to remove the section of the existing A417 between the B4070 junction and the Stockwell junction. This will be considered further during future stages of scheme development. Further information will be presented during the next stage of consultation.
	The habitat loss (woodland) on Crickley Hill will need to be addressed and mitigated.	A key objective for the scheme is to reduce the impact on the landscape and the environment. The concerns raised here about effects on woodlands, habitats and wildlife will be carefully considered in the next stage of the design for the preferred route. Highways England will continue to work closely with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to develop appropriate mitigation measures and ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.
	Objection to Option 12 on the grounds of the loss of a veteran apple tree, located adjacent to the Air Balloon pub car park.	
	Concern that Option 12 could not be mitigated environmentally to provide an acceptable solution.	
Environment	Concern that the proposed cutting on Crickley Hill could interfere with shallow groundwater flows, cutting off some local springs.	A full assessment on local hydrology and hydrogeology will be carried out in the future design and assessment of the scheme and more details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Concern that the proposed cutting could alter natural water flows through aquifers, and potentially dewater the limestone aquifer formations locally.	
	Concern about the impact of Option 12 on watercourses in the Shab Hill area.	
	Support for Option 12 because it impinges less on the countryside.	These comments are noted and Option 12 does offer some benefits over Option 30. However, Option 30 was assessed to have a better balance of all the key objectives for the scheme and has been selected as the preferred route for this scheme.
	Support for Option 12 on the basis that it would disrupt fewer non-motorised routes than Option 30.	Building any solution would require construction of suitable crossings for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Construction methods, phasing and methodology will be developed in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. Highways England will work to

Question 2: Do you have any comments to make in relation to Option 12?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		ensure that construction is carried out as efficiently as possible with the aim of minimising traffic disruption, including to non-motorised users.
Traffic and transport	Concern that implementing a speed limit on Option 12 would result in congestion at peak times.	While a mandatory 50mph speed limit would be necessary to manage safety on the tight bend in the alignment of Option 12, the capacity of this section of highway would be adequate to accommodate forecasted levels of traffic flow.
	Comment that Option 12's route would involve longer journey times due to the longer route and potential speed limit.	Safely accommodating a 70mph speed limit and a shorter journey time are some of the anticipated benefits of Option 30 and have been considered in the selection of the preferred route.
	Concern that any speed limit as part of Option 12 would be ignored.	This concern is noted. One of the benefits of Option 30 is that the route could safely accommodate a 70mph speed limit.

Table 6.10: Matters raised by stakeholders (Question 3 - Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?)

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Alternative proposals	One of the discarded tunnel options should be re-considered as a possible route option.	Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link. All the shortlisted tunnel options exceed the cost range for the scheme and they demonstrated poor value for money. Tunnel options would also have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape, increasing these impacts. When the benefits of tunnel options were weighed against their significant cost, they did not offer value for money for taxpayers and were not taken forward to consultation.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	A tunnel is the best option for the sensitive nature of the AONB. A tunnel is essential to safeguard the landscape and provide a sufficient level of mitigation.	
	The tunnel portals would be unsightly.	
Consultation process	A tunnel option should have been consulted on. Includes comment that the tunnel options outperform the surface options, and that proponents of a tunnel option may feel it has not been given enough consideration and assessment.	The Technical Appraisal Report presented the assessment that was undertaken on the shortlisted options prior to the consultation. Options 12 and 30 were assessed and presented the best opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and were the only two options within the allocated cost range for the scheme. It would not be appropriate to consult on other options that had been discounted.
	The consultation booklet should have illustrated the lengths and gradients of both options and used this as a comparison to the tunnel options. Includes comment that the tunnel options only require two lanes in each direction and that this should have been noted in the booklet.	The Technical Appraisal Report contained detailed technical information on the shortlisted route options. The Technical Appraisal Report was available online, as well as at deposit locations around Gloucestershire and at the public events.
Economic	The tunnel options should not have been rejected through value for money analysis.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link. All shortlisted tunnel options would have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would also need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape, increasing these impacts.
	Concern that not enough analysis was carried out on the tunnel options before they were discounted, and that this means that costs for tunnels were based on a worst-case scenario.	
	The tunnel options should not be ruled out in case the cost of Option 30 and its associated mitigation increase. Includes	

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	concerns that the two surface routes progressed could not be environmentally mitigated/enhanced properly within the scheme's cost range.	When the benefits of tunnel options were weighed against their significant cost, they did not offer value for money for taxpayers and were not taken forward to consultation.
	Concern that the right solution cannot be delivered within the current budgetary limitations. Includes comments that Highways England should secure more funding for a tunnel option.	The Government has set a cost allocation for this scheme. As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the options presented for consultation have been assessed to represent the best solution to deliver the scheme's key objectives within this budget, including delivering value for money for taxpayers.
	If natural capital had been included in the cost benefit analysis, Option 3 would likely have been better value than Option 30.	There is currently no agreed Department for Transport methodology for the assessment of natural capital that could be applied as part of the cost benefit analysis for a nationally significant road scheme.
	Support for Option 3 on the basis that it gives more economic benefits than Option 30 and has the second highest benefit cost ratio of the shortlisted schemes.	While Option 3 had the second highest benefit to cost ratio of the shortlisted options, it was assessed as having a poor value for money rating and would cost more than the cost range allocated for this scheme.
Economic	The method used for cost benefit analysis will be made obsolete by the methodology set out in the Government's 25-year Environment Plan. This includes the need to deliver wider public benefits and the inclusion of natural capital in a scheme's assessment. This was used for the A303 Stonehenge project, why not here?	<p>The economic appraisal methodology used to assess the options followed current guidance set out in WebTAG, DfT's transport appraisal guidance and is consistent with the assessment methodology for other Highways England projects.</p> <p>DEFRA's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" sets out the Government's ambition to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than it was found. It is intended to be read as a statement of intent, setting the direction of travel for future government policy.</p> <p>Highways England will take the 25 Year Plan and any subsequent new legislation or policies that arise from this plan into consideration during subsequent stages of the assessment, where appropriate.</p> <p>Every project, including the A303 Stonehenge project and A417 Missing Link project, has differing requirements, challenges and opportunities and appropriate appraisals for each are undertaken in line with Government guidance.</p> <p>Updated information on the assessments will be published in the Scheme Assessment Report (which can be viewed online at <a href="https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/">https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a417-missing-link/</a>) and more details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.</p>

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	All the discounted tunnel options were too expensive and unaffordable.	This was considered in the selection of Option 30 as the preferred route.
Engineering	Concern about the current safety of the junction onto the A417 at the Highwayman Inn and that this would worsen as a result of the improvements increasing traffic along the route. The junction should be remodelled to include slip roads, or the speed limit should be reduced.	During future stages of scheme development, Highways England will identify any areas where additional traffic may lead to increased safety implications and appropriate mitigation will be provided.
	Noise abatement features should be implemented to reduce the noise experienced by nearby communities.	During future stages of scheme development, Highways England will identify any areas where additional traffic may lead to increased noise and appropriate mitigation will be undertaken.
	Concern that tunnel options would have had significant potential safety issues, should there be a major incident in the tunnel.	Any solution, including a tunnel, would be designed to meet current highways design and safety standards.
	Support for a tunnel option as a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the elimination of delays caused by ice and snow</li> <li>gentler gradients which would save fuel and emissions</li> </ul>	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, tunnel options are no longer under consideration, however these matters were taken into account as part of the appraisal of the shortlisted options, prior to public consultation. Option 30 was assessed to offer the best balance of all the key objectives of the scheme, including transport, safety, environment, heritage, community, access, and economic growth, and has been selected as the preferred route for this scheme.
Environment	Concern about the existing concrete surfaced stretch of the A417/419 between Latton and Daglingworth. The Missing Link improvements would increase traffic along this corridor and the scheme should include the resurfacing of this section of road. The Environment Fund could be used for this.	Current levels of traffic are expected to increase regardless of whether the scheme is constructed. The analysis of the scheme accepts that it would cause an increase in traffic, and the impact of the scheme on related roads in its assessment. Highways England will continue to assess this in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact, where possible. However, while the A417 route is likely to become busier, noise assessments do not suggest there would be a significant increase in noise along the corridor. The section of A417/419 between Latton and Daglingworth will be monitored as part of Highways England's ongoing road maintenance programme. The existing surface will be replaced when it is near or at the end of its life. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.

Question 3: Do you have any comments on any of the other options included in the assessment?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	The tunnel options would pose their own ecological challenges in a sensitive area.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, tunnel options are no longer under consideration, however these matters were taken into account as part of the appraisal of the shortlisted options, prior to public consultation. Option 30 was assessed to offer the best balance of all the key objectives of the scheme, including transport, safety, environment, heritage, community, access, and economic growth, and has been selected as the preferred route for this scheme.
Legacy	A tunnel option would provide the greatest benefits for non-motorised users, as any interaction with fast-moving traffic on the strategic road network would be completely removed.	Building any solution, including a tunnel, would require construction of suitable crossings for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Construction methods, phasing and methodology will be developed in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. Highways England will work to ensure that construction is carried out as efficiently as possible with the aim of minimising traffic disruption, including to non-motorised users.
Traffic and transport	The scheme should aim to reduce rat-running through local villages.	This is an anticipated benefit of Option 30 and has been considered in the selection of the preferred route.
	Comment that a tunnel option would not have split up the traffic effectively and thus concerns for safety, noise/pollution and rat-running would remain.	Both the tunnel options and Option 30 would split the local and strategic traffic in similar ways, as they involve the construction of new routes. Traffic forecasting for Option 30 demonstrates that the route would significantly reduce delays as a result of this separation of traffic flows.
	The tunnel options would be more successful at separating through traffic and local traffic.	

Table 6.11: Matters raised by stakeholders (Question 4 - Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?)

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Alternative proposals	A junction should be constructed at Cowley roundabout as part of Option 30.	Further assessment will be carried out to determine whether an additional junction at the existing Cowley roundabout would offer benefits.
	Air Balloon section of Option 30 should be in a cut and cover tunnel. Additionally, remove the proposed Shab Hill–Barrow Wake link road and add eastbound exit and westbound entry slip roads at Air Balloon roundabout, and eastbound entry and westbound exit slip roads at Cowley roundabout.	Slip roads and a cut and cover tunnel would result in an unacceptable impact on Crickley Hill and Emma’s Grove Scheduled Monuments, both during and after construction, as well as to the Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSIs. Slip roads at these locations would also not meet road safety standards. To provide the necessary access to the strategic road network while reducing rat-running, a junction at an alternative location is required and Shab Hill has been identified as the most suitable location.
	A comprehensive assessment of alternative solutions, such as traffic calming mitigation or improvement of public transport, should have been done.	Prior to the start of the options identification stage, an assessment was completed to review whether a highways scheme was the right solution to the problems identified with this stretch of road. As this section of A417 is already part of the strategic road network, the long-distance haulage and business traffic using the route could not be replaced with a public transport solution. Further reduction of speed on the existing route through traffic calming would lengthen journey times, increase frustration and the use of rat-runs and further inconvenience local communities. Because of this, the A417 Missing Link has been identified as a priority for consideration within the Government’s Road Investment Strategy. It is recognised that these improvements are needed to improve safety, support the economy, ease congestion and reduce local pollution.
	The scheme should include (through designated funds) enhancements to local communities that have been, or would be, impacted by the A417.	Highways England will carry out detailed evaluation to identify any environmental effects that local communities may experience as a result of the scheme during future stages of the scheme’s development and appropriate mitigation will be developed. Opportunities for enhancement outside the required mitigation, using designated funds, will also be identified and reviewed.

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	<p>Concern about the potential negative effects of the proposal on the Cotswolds landscape. Includes concerns raised specifically about the impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the landscape along the Cotswold Way</li> <li>the visitor experience at Crickley Hill</li> </ul>	<p>Highways England fully recognises the sensitive landscape of the Cotswolds and has carried out environmental assessments and studies to understand how the landscape could accommodate the proposed route options. Highways England has met with representatives from environmental groups, statutory agencies and local authorities to discuss opportunities for enhancing the landscape in this area and will continue to work closely with them to identify and include measures to reduce any adverse effects the scheme may have. Further details will be presented in the next stage of consultation.</p>
	<p>Concern about the visual impact of the scheme on the Cotswolds AONB. Includes comments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the proposed option would have a significant adverse effect on the natural beauty of this portion of the Cotswolds AONB</li> <li>existing landscape features which contribute to the natural beauty of the escarpment landscape should be strengthened</li> <li>the visual amenity from key viewpoints on the Cotswold escarpment should be improved</li> <li>the carriageway should be located to take full advantage of natural screening</li> <li>the design of the road and associated infrastructure should reflect the character and special landscape of the Cotswolds, utilising elements of local landscape features</li> </ul>	
	<p>Concern about the impact of the scheme on undesignated heritage assets, including buried archaeology along the route. Further archaeological investigations (including a geophysical survey) will be needed to identify and assess the significance of any undesignated remains.</p>	<p>The area around the proposed route will be subject to extensive surveys with close monitoring during the construction phase of the scheme. Highways England will ensure that any archaeological assets which are uncovered are dealt with appropriately.</p>
	<p>Concern that both route options would sever the link between the Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSIs.</p>	<p>The two SSSIs are considered to be severed by the existing A417. The proposals for Option 30 include provision for a green bridge, which could be located to provide new connectivity between the two areas. In addition, there would be potential to reconnect the Barrow Wake SSSI that is severed by the existing road.</p>
	<p>Any opportunities to enhance the condition of the SSSIs in the area that might be directly, or indirectly, affected by the scheme should be explored.</p>	<p>Extensive surveys and assessments will take place during the future stages of the scheme's development and Highways England will continue to work closely with environmental groups and</p>

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		statutory bodies during the ongoing development of the project to protect and, where possible, enhance the SSSIs in the area.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	The deep cutting for both Options 12 and 30 would separate Emma's Grove Scheduled Monument from its landscape setting.	The proposed deep cutting allows for potential mitigation through landscape design to minimise visual and audible impact. As the existing A417 would be downgraded, and there would be a reduction in heavy vehicle traffic, this is expected to benefit the setting of Emma's Grove. A benefit in connectivity may come from improved accessibility to the Cotswold Way and Gloucestershire Way, linking Emma's Grove with Crickley Hill and the Peak.
	There is an opportunity to remove Emma's Grove Scheduled Monument from the Heritage at Risk register; this could be secured through better management of the site as part of the scheme.	Opportunities to improve Emma's Grove are being considered as part of the development of Option 30. Further details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Concern about the impact of the cutting and the increase in vehicle movements at Crickley Hill.	The cutting for Option 30 would follow the alignment of the existing A417 past Crickley Hill, towards Air Balloon roundabout. Construction of the dual carriageway would improve traffic flow and reduce the levels of pollution caused by static vehicles on the existing single carriageway A417. The proposed deep cutting allows for potential mitigation through landscape design to minimise visual and audible impact around Crickey Hill.
	Concern that disregarding the existing A417 would leave an unnecessary tarmac and concrete scar on the landscape.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report and consultation booklet, Option 30 provides an opportunity to remove a length of the existing A417 between the B4070 junction and the Stockwell junction. This will be explored further as the design for Option 30 is progressed.
	The scheme should include for full reinstatement of the land along and surrounding the route, with a focus on valued landscape features which contribute to the natural beauty of the escarpment landscape.	
	Positioning of roadside signage should be undertaken with sensitivity in order to minimise clutter on the landscape.	Signage design and placement will be assessed at future stages of the scheme's development. All signage will be designed to meet highways safety standards and consideration will be given to reducing visual impact on the AONB, where possible
	A country park could be created on land required to deliver the landscape and biodiversity mitigation for the scheme.	The creation of a country park falls outside the scope of the scheme. Mitigation for landscape and biodiversity will be designed following assessment during future stages of the scheme's development of the scheme, alongside liaison with the relevant statutory agencies.
	There is potential to develop Option 30 to better fit the AONB.	

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & Cultural Heritage	Highways England should consider conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB.	<p>Highways England fully recognises the sensitive landscape of the Cotswolds and has carried out environmental assessments and studies to understand how the landscape could accommodate the proposed route options. Highways England has met with representatives from environmental groups, statutory agencies and local authorities to discuss opportunities for enhancing the landscape in this area and will continue to work closely with them to identify and include measures to reduce any adverse effects the scheme may have. Further details will be presented in the next stage of consultation.</p> <p>An objective of the scheme has been to reduce the impact of the route on the landscape and historic environment of the Cotswolds, and this was a key factor in the assessment of the shortlisted options, as set out in the Technical Appraisal Report. Option 30 was assessed to provide the best balance of all the key objectives of the scheme, including transport, safety, environment, heritage, community, access, and economic growth.</p>
	Road improvement solutions should aim to improve the quality of life for Gloucestershire locals and conserve the AONB.	
	Insufficient weight was given to the sensitive nature of the landscape and the environment when the sifting process was undertaken.	
	The proposed solutions are not appropriate within the Cotswolds AONB.	
	If approved, the scheme would set a dangerous precedent for damaging developments in nationally designated landscapes.	Each scheme within Highways England's portfolio is assessed on its own merits and includes a detailed process for identifying and shortlisting possible route options. The A417 Missing Link was identified by the Government as requiring improvement as part of its Road Investment Strategy and Option 30 will continue to be developed to meet all the objectives for the scheme, including paying significant regard to the Cotswolds AONB.
	Unless the road is placed in a tunnel, no proposed mitigation could adequately address the permanent damage to the landscape's habitats.	A key objective for the scheme is to reduce the impact on the landscape and the environment. The concerns raised about effects on woodlands, habitats and wildlife will be carefully considered in the next stage of the design for the preferred route. Highways England will continue to work closely with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to develop appropriate mitigation measures and ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Construction	Concern about the impact of construction on the highway network, in particular potential delays and expense to road users and local communities.	Highways England will develop detailed traffic management plans in future stages of the scheme's development to minimise traffic disruption during construction.
	The construction phase should be managed to discourage rat-running.	Rat-running through local roads is an important consideration and potential mitigation measures during construction will be considered and discussed with the local highway authority, Gloucestershire County Council, during the ongoing development of the scheme.
	Environmental impact during construction should be properly considered. Includes comments that a Construction Environmental Management Plan should be produced.	Environmental Management Plans will be produced under Highways England's Project Control Framework to demonstrate in detail how commitments and duties to the environment will be managed and delivered in the design, construction, handover and maintenance of the scheme.
	Concern about accidental spillage of fuels during construction, which could put the water environment at severe risk. Measures should be put in place to prevent this.	This is a known concern and measures to prevent this will be put in place by the contractor appointed by Highways England.
	Clear signage should be installed for public rights of way during construction.	Signage provision for public rights of way will be provided in agreement with Gloucestershire County Council.
	The Cotswold Way National Trail should remain open to walkers throughout the works.	Highways England will aim to minimise or avoid diversions and/or closures of public rights of way during construction. Further details will be presented during future stages of consultation.
	Concern about the local tourism industry being negatively impacted during construction due to access difficulties and the Cotswold escarpment being less tranquil.	Highways England recognises the importance of tourism to the local economy and impact during construction will be minimised or mitigated as far as possible.
	Arrangements should be put in place to host the workforce in the area; this could be used as an economic opportunity.	The preparation of the construction programme, including the hosting of the workforce, will be undertaken in future stages of the scheme's development. The appointed contractor for the scheme will be responsible for planning hosting arrangements and will consider all factors in choosing the most suitable location for its workers and the local community.
	Young people could be involved in the design and construction process as part of the STEM curriculum.	Highways England has launched a STEM outreach programme for schools in the local area and will continue to develop this as the scheme moves to construction.
Consultation process	A tunnel option should have been included in the consultation, as Highways England previously identified them as outperforming the	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, Highways England considered a range of route options for the A417 Missing Link. All

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<p>surface route options on economy, environmental and social measures.</p> <p>The consultation should be redone and include Option 3.</p>	<p>shortlisted tunnel options would have adverse environmental and visual impacts due to the need for tunnel portals and link roads to the existing A417 and A436. The existing A417 would also need to be retained for local access so there would be an overall increase in infrastructure in the landscape, increasing these impacts. All shortlisted tunnel options, including Option 3, demonstrate poor value for money and exceed the cost range for the scheme. When any benefits of tunnel options were weighed against their significant cost, they did not offer value for money for taxpayers and were not taken forward to consultation.</p>
	<p>The public should have been allowed to express a view as to whether they would be prepared to accept a cost above the budget for the scheme.</p>	<p>As part of Highways England's licence, the company must act in a manner which ensures value for money for taxpayers. The schemes above the cost range allocated for this scheme did not represent value for money for the taxpayer so were not considered to be deliverable solutions for the A417 Missing Link.</p>
	<p>The two options that were taken to consultation did not meet the agreed vision and scheme objectives.</p>	<p>Options 12 and 30 were assessed and presented the best opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and were the only two options within the allocated cost range for the scheme.</p>
	<p>Comment that the consultation is only for one option: Option 30. Includes comments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the consultation falls short of the expectations for that of a major road scheme</li> <li>the process appears to be a box ticking exercise to allow Highways England to say it consulted the public before it selected its preferred route</li> </ul>	<p>The Technical Appraisal Report presented the assessment that was undertaken on the shortlisted options prior to the consultation. Options 12 and 30 were assessed and both meet the scheme's objectives and both options are within the allocated cost range for the scheme. The benefits offered by Option 12 would be less than those provided by Option 30 and, over the 60-year appraisal period, they would deliver a substantially lower return on investment for taxpayers. Option 30 provides greater opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and is the only option to offer a positive return on investment for taxpayers.</p>
	<p>The consultation material dismisses Option 12 in preference for Option 30.</p>	<p>The consultation material presented information on both Options 12 and 30 on an equal basis and was timed to provide the opportunity for the public to express any views and preferences before the decision on the preferred route was made. The input of local people has been particularly valuable as they have been able to respond with detailed knowledge of certain issues relevant to the local area.</p>

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		The consultation attracted a high number of respondents and every response has been read and the feedback helped to inform the choice of preferred route. It will also inform the continued development of the scheme.
Economic	<p>The cost benefit analysis was too limiting and did not capture the range of extended environmental, tourism and health benefits of the options. Includes specific comments that the analysis should have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health and well-being benefits for local residents</li> <li>• wider economic benefits and national/international tourism gains from an improved landscape if the road was placed in a tunnel</li> <li>• social benefits of delivering a landscape-led scheme</li> <li>• natural capital benefits along the Cotswold escarpment</li> <li>• impact on agriculture and farming</li> <li>• the public's willingness to pay for a tunnel option</li> </ul>	<p>The economic appraisal of the scheme and the cost benefit analysis in particular, is based on methodologies which are accepted by Treasury and the Department for Transport. Where analysis methodologies are available for the listed points, they were found not to be applicable to this scheme. Highways England will continue to investigate and develop the assessment of the cost benefit analysis as the scheme progresses.</p>
	<p>A more detailed analysis of the scheme's costs would be beneficial and could provide reassurance that the mitigation required to justify the landscape-led ambition is fully costed.</p>	<p>A breakdown of the scheme's costs will not be made public as it contains commercially sensitive information. However, the scheme budget will include costs for environmental and landscape mitigation identified as required.</p>
	<p>The case for building the Missing Link is far from compelling given its low or poor cost benefit ratio.</p>	<p>Highways England will continue to review the monetised costs and benefits of the proposed scheme. The high costs reflect the complexity of the scheme, however the proposed scheme provides high monetised benefits per kilometre. Combined with other non-monetised considerations there is a strong strategic case for the scheme to progress. Of the options put forward for consultation, Option 30 provides greater opportunities to meet the scheme's objectives and is the only option to offer a positive return on investment for taxpayers. The benefits and costs of the scheme will continue to be assessed as the scheme is developed further.</p>
	<p>Investment in job creation across the county could be more cost effective than road building to meet reduced traffic demand, as a result of focused economic growth in Gloucester and Cheltenham.</p>	<p>The strategic road network plays an important role in the national economy. An improved and efficient strategic road network will maintain competitiveness and help the economy to grow. Without investment in the A417 Missing Link, the</p>

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		<p>existing congestion on the strategic road network caused by the single carriageway sections will worsen and potentially constrain economic development.</p> <p>The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies the A417 Missing Link as a key scheme for improvement in the south west, recognising the importance of the route to the local economy. Highways England is responsible for delivering this Road Investment Strategy.</p>
	The cost for the scheme is an arbitrary constraint to exclude the tunnel options.	The Government's Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment for the strategic road network in the south west. The A417 Missing Link has been identified as a priority for consideration and a cost allocation of £250–£500 million has been set for the scheme. The maximum limit will help ensure the project represents value for money to taxpayers.
	It is essential that the cost for the scheme does not prevent a solution from being delivered.	Highways England has identified Option 30 as being deliverable within the cost range for the scheme and the best fit with the scheme's objectives.
Economic	The surface options degrade the value of the landscape and sever recreational connections.	<p>Recreational connections are currently severed by the existing A417. Option 30 includes provision for bridges and underpasses to maintain and improve existing recreational connections for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.</p> <p>Highways England will work with relevant stakeholders, representative groups and statutory bodies to identify and implement mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the scheme on the landscape.</p>
	<p>Concern about impact on the local economy during construction, primarily as a result of traffic queues, delays, and loss of tranquillity. Includes comments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there could be huge hidden costs to businesses through avoidance of the route by workers</li> <li>• tourism could be impacted due to the noise generated by the building activity, in addition to reduced access</li> <li>• the surface options could be far less viable than the tunnel options because of the disruption they would cause</li> </ul>	<p>As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the impact of delays during construction were measured as part of the economic assessment of the shortlisted options and factored into the overall return on investment calculations.</p> <p>Option 30 has been chosen as the preferred route and much of the scheme can be developed off line from the existing route. Highways England will develop more detail on traffic management during construction at a later stage in the scheme's development and will seek to reduce any impact that may arise from the construction of the scheme.</p>

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	Tourism in the Cotswolds is just as much a commercial consideration as all the other activities driving prosperity in the area.	Highways England recognises the importance of tourism to the local economy and supporting visitors' enjoyment of the area is one of the key objectives for the scheme.
Engineering	The scheme should include the removal of all redundant infrastructure associated with the current A417 and the construction phase of the new route.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report and consultation booklet, there is an opportunity under Option 30 to remove a length of the existing A417. The remainder of the road would be maintained to facilitate local traffic movements. This will be considered further in the future stages of the scheme's design and assessment. More details will be presented during future stages of public consultation.
	Further details should be provided on the methods that would be employed to discharge storm water off the carriageway.	The details of storm drainage for the scheme will be presented during future stages of consultation following liaison with statutory agencies.
Environment	General concern about the impact of air pollution as a result of the scheme. Includes concerns about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• additional nitrogen emissions as a result of increased traffic</li> <li>• air quality at local designated sites</li> </ul>	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, the shortlisted options were all predicted to bring benefits to local air quality, with improvements predicted in the Birdlip Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). This is a result of the scheme enabling free-flowing traffic on the A417.
	Concern that the scheme improvements would increase volumes of traffic on the A417 and subsequently increase air pollution and noise for communities along the route.	Concerns raised about the scheme causing a potential increase in traffic volume and a resultant increase in air pollution will be taken into consideration as part of optimising the design of Option 30, and mitigation measures will be developed to ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented as part of the next stage of consultation.
	Concern about noise generated by the existing concrete surfaced stretch of the A417/419 between Latton and Daglingworth. The Missing Link improvements would increase traffic along this corridor and the scheme should include the resurfacing of this section of road. Other comments suggest noise mitigation measures should be implemented in this location, and that the Environment Fund could be used for this.	Current levels of traffic are expected to increase regardless of whether the scheme is constructed. The analysis of the scheme accepts that it would cause an increase in traffic, and the impact of the scheme on related roads in its assessment. Highways England will continue to assess this in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact, where possible. However, while the A417 route is likely to become busier, noise assessments do not suggest there would be a significant increase in noise along the corridor.

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		The section of A417/419 between Latton and Daglingworth will be monitored as part of Highways England's ongoing road maintenance programme. The existing surface will be replaced when it is near or at the end of its life. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.
Environment	<p>Concern about the effect of the scheme on local flora and fauna. Includes comments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the scheme should protect habitats and biodiversity, along with minimising environmental damage</li> <li>connectivity for wildlife habitats (with specific mention of connectivity across the escarpment) is important</li> <li>the scheme should promote natural colonisation</li> <li>mitigation on the scheme should include the enrichment and enhancement of the existing calcareous grassland, and Highways England should work with key stakeholders to identify and nurture new areas of calcareous grassland</li> <li>there should be a net gain of well managed land under wildlife or habitat conservation criteria</li> <li>following the implementation of the scheme, the continued management of downland characteristics should be ensured</li> <li>detailed surveys will be required as part of the ecological assessment of the area</li> </ul>	<p>A key objective for the scheme is to reduce the impact on the landscape and the environment and the concerns raised here about effects on woodlands, habitats and wildlife will be carefully considered in the next stage of the design. Highways England will continue to work closely with the relevant environmental groups and statutory agencies to develop appropriate mitigation measures and ensure there are no unacceptable impacts. More details will be presented during future consultation stages.</p>
Environment	<p>Responses were received advising on the design of the green bridge. These include comments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the proposed green bridge should be an integral part of the scheme and designed to a high standard</li> <li>the green bridge should be wider than 50m</li> <li>the width should be determined by the size suitable to deliver effective connectivity, the nature of habitats being connected, and the species likely to be using it</li> <li>it should be seeded with native wildflower seeds, and vegetated with native trees, shrubs and grasses, along</li> </ul>	<p>A provision for building a green bridge in the vicinity of Air Balloon roundabout has been included in the cost estimate for Option 30 to improve connectivity between the habitats at the Crickley Hill and Barrow Wake SSSIs, which are currently severed by the existing A417. More details will be presented during future stages of consultation.</p> <p>Comments in relation to the design of the green bridge, fencing and other infrastructure as part of the scheme, will be considered in the ongoing development of Option 30. Design and assessment work will be undertaken in conjunction with the relevant statutory</p>

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<p>with the creation of amphibian habitat and erection of wildlife fencing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>two green bridges should be built, both substantially wider than the one currently proposed.</li> </ul>	<p>agencies, and more details will be published in future stages of consultation.</p>
	<p>Multi-functional green infrastructure is important to underpin the overall sustainability of the development as it would perform a range of functions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flood risk management</li> <li>climate change adaptation</li> <li>supporting biodiversity</li> </ul>	
	<p>Concern about the impact of the scheme on the local water environment/hydrology. Includes specific concerns about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>groundwater impact from proposed cuttings and effects of drawdown on water features</li> <li>impact from barriers such as embankments, piling and foundations</li> <li>impact on the quality of groundwater as a result of drainage from the road</li> <li>issues at wetlands or other designated sites, resulting from impact on the water environment.</li> </ul>	
	<p>Concern that the proposed road construction could remove aquifer bearing rocks, leading to loss of water from the aquifer, causing naturally discharging springs to dry up.</p>	<p>Matters raised about the potential impact of Option 30 on the local water environment will be considered throughout the future development of the scheme. Highways England is carrying out detailed surveys of surface and ground water sources, and will work with the relevant statutory agencies to incorporate any mitigation measures into the design of Option 30, where appropriate.</p>
Environment	<p>The scheme presents an opportunity to provide flood risk betterment due to downstream sensitivities.</p>	
	<p>Comments received about survey works that should be undertaken to determine the potential impact on the water environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the scheme will require an Environmental Impact Assessment and Hydrogeological Impact Assessment</li> <li>it will also require site investigations targeting the scheme sections that would be at most risk to the water environment</li> <li>a conceptual model should be produced for the water environment, to understand and mitigate the risks</li> </ul>	

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a water features survey should be undertaken to understand risks and impact to other water users and the environment</li> <li>ground investigations should be undertaken to understand the hydrogeological conditions</li> <li>understanding the geomorphology of the area will be key to the scheme</li> </ul>	
	Road lighting should be positioned to limit light pollution.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, street lighting is not proposed on the mainline route of the A417 and will only be installed where it is necessary for safety. An assessment of any benefits of street lighting at selected junctions will take place as part of the scheme's future development, and more details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	An Environmental Impact Assessment should take place on the effect of the proposals on Daglingworth.	Daglingworth is approximately six miles south of Cowley roundabout. The impact of the scheme on nearby roads, junctions and city/town centres has been considered in its assessment and will continue to be assessed in future stages of the scheme's design to minimise any adverse impact where possible.
Environment	Part of the original A417 (which now forms a car park and viewpoint at Barrow Wake) should be removed, connecting the limestone grassland and redesigning the visitor infrastructure.	The relative merits and feasibility of these suggestions will be reviewed as part of the scheme's future design and development.
	A land bridge should be built close to Emma's Grove to provide a landscape link for the Scheduled Monument.	
	The scheme should be screened from an early stage.	Environmental screening, consistent with the relevant legislation, has been completed as described in the Technical Appraisal Report.
	Highways England has not taken full account of the Government's 25-year Environment Plan in the development of the scheme.	DEFRA's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" sets out the Government's ambition to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than it was found. It is intended to be read as a statement of intent, setting the direction of travel for future government policy.

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		<p>Highways England works within the Government's policy framework and will take the 25 Year Plan and any subsequent new legislation or policies that arise from this plan into consideration during subsequent stages of the assessment, where appropriate.</p> <p>On the advice of stakeholders, including the Cotswolds Conservation Board, Highways England carried out a landscape study as part of the route options identification process. This study helped to inform the alignment of route options, including Option 30.</p> <p>Highways England is continuing to work with relevant stakeholders to deliver a landscape-led highways scheme which balances all of the project's key objectives. More details will be presented at the next stage of consultation.</p>
Land requirements	<p>Objection to the removal of the Air Balloon pub; this is part of the area's character and a popular place for families and locals.</p>	<p>All options considered would have adverse impacts on a number of residential and commercial properties. The potential demolition of the Air Balloon pub has been the subject of several assessments and appraisals and will continue to be assessed in greater detail as the design progresses.</p> <p>Highways England is in discussion with all affected landowners regarding the proposals.</p>
	<p>Concern about the severance of land from farm buildings, leading to a decrease in viability of farm holdings.</p>	
	<p>Consideration should be given to crossing points for public rights of way that intersect the proposed routes. Comments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate crossings should be provided for any rights of way that would be severed by the new road</li> <li>formal grade-separated crossing points should be used for the Cotswold Way and the Gloucestershire Way</li> <li>dedicated equestrian crossings should be considered for bridleways</li> </ul>	<p>Maintaining connectivity to and between rights of way and overcoming severance of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders is a key consideration and will continue to be a key consideration in the further development of the route design.</p> <p>Highways England's Cycling Strategy seeks to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport through the development of an integrated, comprehensive and high quality cycling network, including facilities that are safe and separate from traffic. Highways England is working closely with Gloucestershire County Council, which is responsible for the improvement of local rights of way, to assess and agree how footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways can be maintained and improved. More details will be presented during future stages of public consultation.</p>
	<p>A physically separated cycle lane should be provided along the existing A417.</p>	
<p>There are no existing suitable cycle routes up the escarpment from either Cheltenham or Gloucester; a route is badly needed.</p>		

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Legacy	No consideration has been made for non-motorised users who currently use the A417.	Non-motorised users have been considered in the appraisal of the shortlisted options and will continue to be considered in the ongoing development of Option 30.
	Concern that the proposed five lanes on Crickley Hill would pose an impossible barrier to wildlife and people and would be significantly worse than the current situation.	The impact of the road on Crickley Hill has been and will continue to be assessed. During the development of the scheme, where appropriate and necessary, mitigation measures will be incorporated to minimise any severance for wildlife and people. One of these measures includes the construction of a green bridge which is proposed in the vicinity of Crickley Hill.
	The scheme would lead to less attractive conditions for non-motorised users because of an overall increase in traffic.	While the new A417 route is likely to become busier, the reduction in traffic using local roads for rat-running would be one of the anticipated benefits of the scheme and would help to make the local roads more pleasant for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
	Access to Shab Hill, Cuckoo Pen Farm and Stockwell should be clarified.	Detailed access arrangements will be developed as part of the detailed design of Option 30 and in collaboration with affected parties. Further details will be presented in future stages of consultation.
	Highways England should carry out an accessibility study in consultation with the National Trust, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and key stakeholders.	Highways England is working closely with a range of stakeholders to discuss the development of the scheme. Highways England will continue to engage with stakeholders in the further development of the scheme.
	The quantity of publicly accessible land should be increased, particularly in the vicinity of Crickley Hill Country Park and Barrow Wake.	These suggestions are outside Highways England's remit as the highways authority for the strategic road network. Highways England will continue to engage with stakeholders on how the scheme could facilitate opportunities for the surrounding area.
	Explore how visitor pressure on the Crickley Hill SSSI and Scheduled Monument can be reduced and better managed in the future.	
	The scheme should consider the provision of new areas for recreation to relieve pressure on other visitor hotspots in the area.	
	Once the scheme is completed, the sections of the former A417 no longer in use should be removed.	Option 30 provides an opportunity to remove a section of the existing A417 between the B4070 junction and the Stockwell junction. Highways England will assess this as part of the development of Option 30.
	In Option 30, the existing A417 between the B4070 junction and Stockwell Farm junction should become a public right of way for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.	

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Need	<p>The improvements are important for the economy of the region. The Missing Link affects business investment into Cheltenham and Gloucester due to delays to commuter traffic.</p> <p>Fixing the Missing Link would make Gloucestershire's roads significantly safer, cut air pollution and remove a key obstacle to growing Gloucestershire's economy.</p> <p>Recognition of the need to find a solution to the Missing Link.</p>	<p>The strategic road network plays an important role in the national economy. An improved and efficient strategic road network will maintain competitiveness and help the economy to grow. Without investment in the A417 Missing Link, the existing congestion on the strategic road network caused by the single carriageway sections will worsen and potentially constrain economic development.</p> <p>The Government's Road Investment Strategy identifies routes along the strategic road network, which needs upgrading to improve safety, connectivity, and reliability for its users. An important part of the Road Investment Strategy involves £2bn of investment in the south west to boost economic growth in the region. The A417 Missing Link has been identified as a priority for consideration.</p>
	<p>Challenging comments were received regarding the need for the A417 to be improved, to the following effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing new road capacity is only a temporary solution to congestion</li> <li>• the improvements would bring higher traffic volumes and encourage greater car use, which would be at odds with other key public policy priorities, such as CO2 emissions</li> <li>• investment should be made into improving the capacity for rail freight instead</li> </ul>	
Traffic and transport	<p>Concern that the proposals for the Missing Link would disadvantage users of the A436 as they would have to take an indirect route to access the A417.</p>	<p>The proposal for Option 30 includes provision for a safe, reliable and free-flowing link from the A436 to the A417. The traffic modelling work completed identifies that this route would reduce</p>

Question 4: Is there anything further you would like us to consider in relation to improving the A417 Missing Link?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
		the number of road users rat-running through inappropriate local roads.
	Concern that the Leckhampton Hill/A436 junction would become more dangerous and difficult to use following the improvements and would require traffic lights or a roundabout.	As set out in the Technical Appraisal Report, it is recognised that this junction would need to be addressed, and measures such as traffic lights or a roundabout will be considered in the ongoing development of the scheme.
Traffic and transport	The Cowley/Ullenwood crossroads junction on the A436 must be addressed by the relevant agencies, with traffic speeds and volume likely to increase.	The improvement of the local road network is under the jurisdiction of the local highway authority, Gloucestershire County Council. The interaction between the local road network and the A417 will be discussed with Gloucestershire County Council during the ongoing development of Option 30.
	Calming measures should be implemented on local roads around Brimpsfield and Birdlip to reduce traffic volume and vehicle speed. Includes proposals to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce the speed limit to 20mph</li> <li>• signpost existing roads as single track with passing places</li> <li>• reinstate formal passing places and narrow existing lanes to prevent vehicles using verges</li> <li>• implement speed cameras and other measures to enforce the speed limit</li> </ul>	
	Concern that the use of the Birdlip Hill rat-run may increase under Option 30 as A436 traffic travelling to/from Gloucester would have a longer route to access the A417.	The reduction in rat-running through local roads is an important consideration of the scheme and it is anticipated the new route would reduce levels of rat-running traffic.
	Provisions, such as brown signage, should be included in the scheme to ensure the Golden Heart Inn is not significantly affected by the loss of passing trade.	It is recognised that the Golden Heart Inn would no longer be located adjacent to the trunk road as part of Option 30. These suggestions will be considered as part of future stages of the scheme's design and assessment.
	Support for the scheme because it would result in free-flowing traffic through strategic transport routes.	This is one of the primary objectives of the scheme and an anticipated benefit of its implementation.

Table 6.12: Matters raised by stakeholders (Question 6 - Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?)

Question 6: Do you have any feedback on this consultation – events, information provided, advertising, etc?		
Theme	Matters raised	Highways England response
Consultation process	The consultation material lacked detail/clarity. Includes comments that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the consultation maps were not clear; the existing routes were too faint and information on access for local traffic to the new A417 was not shown</li> <li>rights of way should have been shown more clearly on consultation maps</li> <li>a 3D model should have been produced for the proposals</li> <li>the video fly-through did not match the description in the technical report</li> </ul>	These comments are welcomed and will be kept as lessons learnt to inform the next consultation stage and ensure that information is presented in a way that develops a clear understanding of the more detailed scheme proposals.
	Detail on mitigation could have been made available at this stage to allow consultees to better appreciate the merits of the scheme.	The consultation booklet provided a summary of information on the route selection process and the Technical Appraisal Report set out sufficient information to enable an informed opinion on the options. More detailed information on mitigation will be presented at future consultation stages when further detailed design work has been carried out on the preferred route. Consultation will be held before the scheme proposals are submitted for planning consent.
	It would have been beneficial to have more background information made available to assist and inform the overall consultation process; significant data behind the Technical Appraisal Report was not published.	
	A consultation event should have been held in Birdlip.	Six public events were held at a range of locations and venues. They were selected to be accessible as possible and around 800 people attended the events. Additional or alternative venues will be considered for the next stage of public consultation, which is currently scheduled for summer 2019.
Consultation process	A number of suggestions were made for organisations and individuals to be notified about future consultations on the scheme.	Suggested organisations and individuals have been added to the list of stakeholders to be notified about future consultations.
	Positive comments were received about the consultation events.	These comments are welcomed.
	Positive comments were received about the organisation of the non-statutory consultation process.	
Traffic and transport	Improving the reliability of journey times should be a significant factor in improving the Missing Link.	This is one of the scheme's key objectives.

## 7. Conclusions and next steps

### 7.1. Did the consultation achieve its purpose?

- 7.1.1. The consultation was widespread, using both traditional and digital channels, to inform people about the scheme and that the consultation was taking place and ensure everyone who wanted to get involved had access to the consultation materials and was able to participate. The consultation reached local communities, businesses and wider audiences with an interest in the A417 Missing Link. Hard-to-reach groups were identified and reasonable attempts were made to engage them. Figure 4.3 in section 4.5 shows the distribution of responses from around the country.
- 7.1.2. Many attending the public events were complimentary about the quality of the materials and the professionalism of staff in attendance. There were also some less positive comments challenging the validity of the consultation; the lack of tunnel options shown during the consultation; and whether sufficient information was provided on certain issues. However, in terms of meeting its purpose, the consultation was successful. It has proved effective, not only in informing a wide audience about the planned scheme, but also in securing valuable feedback that has informed the appraisal and assessment of route options and the selection of Option 30 as the preferred route, as set out in the Scheme Assessment Report, which is published alongside this document.
- 7.1.3. The feedback shows how meaningful, purposeful and informative the consultation has been. Local knowledge and experience, together with related expertise, has helped inform the choice of preferred route. Many matters were raised during the consultation and have either been responded to directly in this document or will be kept under consideration and fed into the ongoing development of the scheme. Highways England recognises and is fully appreciative of the contribution to scheme's development so far.

### 7.2. Preferred route and next steps

- 7.2.1. The consultation showed that there is a high degree of support for the principle of improving the A417 Missing Link and for Option 30, which Highways England has now selected as the preferred route for the scheme.
- 7.2.2. The Scheme Assessment Report, published alongside this document, provides additional detail on the selection and development of the preferred route since the close of consultation. Prior to submitting a planning application for a Development Consent Order under the Planning Act 2008, Highways England

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will carry out a further public consultation on the detailed design proposals for the scheme, currently scheduled for summer 2019.

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## Abbreviations List

<b>ANPR</b>	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
<b>AONB</b>	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<b>AQMA</b>	Air Quality Management Area
<b>DCO</b>	Development Consent Order
<b>DfT</b>	Department for Transport
<b>DMRB</b>	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
<b>DTA</b>	Drainage Treatment Area
<b>EAR</b>	Environmental Assessment Report
<b>EAST</b>	Early Assessment and Sifting Tool
<b>HGV</b>	Heavy Goods Vehicle
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
<b>LEP</b>	Local Enterprise Partnership
<b>NMU</b>	Non-Motorised User
<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
<b>NPSNN</b>	National Policy Statement for National Networks
<b>NSIP</b>	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
<b>ORPA</b>	Other Routes with Public Access
<b>PRoW</b>	Public right of way
<b>RIGS</b>	Regionally Important Geological Site
<b>RIS</b>	Road Investment Strategy
<b>ROI</b>	Return on Investment
<b>SAC</b>	Special Area of Conservation
<b>SAR</b>	Scheme Assessment Report
<b>SSSI</b>	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<b>TAR</b>	Technical Appraisal Report
<b>WFD</b>	Water Framework Directive

## Glossary

<b>Air Quality Management Area</b>	An area which has been designated by the local authority as likely not to meet nationally prescribed air quality standards and objectives.
<b>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</b>	An area other than a National Park designated for conservation due to its natural beauty.
<b>Client Scheme Requirements</b>	The objectives of the A417 Missing Link scheme.
<b>Department for Transport</b>	Government department responsible for the transport network in England, and for aspects of the transport network in the devolved administrations.
<b>Development Consent Order</b>	The means of applying for consent to undertake a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). NSIPs include, for example, major energy and transport projects.
<b>Drainage Treatment Area</b>	Receives surface water run-off from the highway and processes it through a range of treatments to remove any pollutants and ensure water quality before allowing infiltration to ground.
<b>Environmental Management Plan</b>	A document which details the environmental effects of a scheme and identifies the ways in which these will be mitigated, reduced or avoided.
<b>Grade-separated</b>	At different levels; for example, a grade-separated junction is two or more roads crossing above or under each other.
<b>Heavy Goods Vehicle</b>	Any vehicle with a gross combination mass (GCM) of over 3,500 kilograms.
<b>Historic England</b>	Public body that champions and protects England's historic places, funded largely by the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS).
<b>International Union for Conservation of Nature</b>	A membership union comprised of both government and civil society organisations, involved with nature conservation and sustainability of natural resources.
<b>Local Enterprise Partnership</b>	A voluntary partnership set up between local authorities and businesses to drive local economic growth and job creation activities. There are 39 LEPs across England.
<b>National Infrastructure Plan</b>	Document published by the UK Government, setting out its strategy for meeting the infrastructure needs of the UK economy.
<b>National Planning Policy Framework</b>	The primary national policy document guiding the designation of local plans and consideration of applications for planning permission by local authorities.
<b>National Policy Statement for National Networks (2015)</b>	Sets out the national roads policy framework, as presented to Parliament in December 2014.

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<b>National Trail</b>	A long-distance public right of way. In England, these are managed by Natural England. There are 16 of these trails across England and Wales.
<b>National Trust</b>	Charity that cares for historic houses, gardens, ancient monuments, countryside and other sites across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, including the Stonehenge landscape.
<b>Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project</b>	A project which requires development consent to be granted by the relevant Secretary of State, as defined by the Planning Act 2008.
<b>Natural England</b>	An executive non-departmental public body responsible for the natural environment
<b>NMU</b>	Non-Motorised User Cyclists, pedestrians (including wheelchair users), and equestrians using the public highway.
<b>Public Right of way</b>	A way over which the public have a right to pass and repass. The route option may be used on foot, on (or leading) a horse, on a pedal cycle or with a motor vehicle, depending on its status. Although the land may be owned by a private individual, the public may still gain access across that land along a defined route. Public rights of way are all highways in law.
<b>Regionally Important Geological Site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A site designated as an important location for geology and geomorphology other than statutorily protected land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).</li></ul>
<b>Road Investment Strategy</b>	The Government's strategy to improve England's motorways and major A roads. The first RIS (known as RIS1) was published in 2014 and covers the period 2015-2020.
<b>Scheduled Monument</b>	A 'nationally important' archaeological site or historic building, given protection against unauthorised change and included in the Schedule of Monuments kept by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The protection given to Scheduled Monuments is given under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
<b>The scheme</b>	The A417 Missing Link scheme (where not implicit).
<b>Site of special scientific interest (SSSI)</b>	A conservation designation denoting to a protected area in the United Kingdom. The sites are protected by law to conserve their wildlife or geology. In England, the designating body for SSSIs, Natural England, selects SSSIs that have a particular landscape, geological or ecological characteristic.
<b>Special Area of Conservation</b>	A site designated under the Habitats Directive. These sites, together with Special Protection Areas (or SPAs), are called Natura sites and they are internationally important for threatened habitats and species.
<b>Strategic Road Network</b>	The network of approximately 4,300 miles of motorways and major 'trunk' A roads across England, managed by Highways England.
<b>Water Framework Directive</b>	An EU directive which aims to achieve good status of all water bodies (surface water, groundwater and the sites that depend on

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them, estuaries and near-shore coastal waters) and prevent any deterioration. It has introduced a comprehensive river basin management planning system to protect and improve the ecological quality of the water environment. It is underpinned by the use of environmental standards.

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