

## Wiltshire Council

### Cabinet

5 January 2021

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**Subject:** A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Road Scheme

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste

**Key Decision:** Key

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#### Executive Summary

The A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Road Scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) promoted by Highways England (HE). The scheme comprises a new dual, two-lane carriageway approximately eight miles in length with the following key features:

- A bypass to the north of Winterbourne Stoke with a viaduct over the River Till valley
- Grassland habitat creation that would allow extension of the Parsonage Down National Nature Reserve
- A new junction with the A360 to the west of and outside the World Heritage Site (WHS), with the A303 passing under the junction
- A section through the WHS with a twin-bore tunnel past Stonehenge at least 1.8 miles (2.9 kilometres) long
- A new junction with the A345 at the existing Countess roundabout to the north of Amesbury, with the A303 passing over the junction
- The conversion of the existing A303 through the WHS into a route for walking, cycling and horse riding
- New 'green bridges' to connect existing habitats and allow the movement of wildlife, maintain existing agricultural access and provide crossing for existing and new bridleways and public footpaths.

Following the statutory public consultation held between 8 February 2018 and 23 April 2018, HE undertook a further supplementary consultation between 17 July 2018 to 14 August 2018, which this Council responded to.

HE submitted the A303 Stonehenge Development Consent Order (DCO) application on 19 October 2018 and it was accepted for Examination on 16 November 2018. A panel of five inspectors was appointed as the Examining Authority (ExA) to oversee the Examination proceedings. The DCO Examination commenced on 2 April 2019 and concluded on 2 October 2019.

Following the submission of the ExA's recommendation to the Secretary of State on 2 January 2020, a decision on the scheme was expected by 2 April 2020. However, due to the Secretary of State's need to obtain further information, the decision deadline was extended until 17 July 2020 and then again until 13 November 2020. During this time, the Secretary of State sought additional information and comment on three occasions relating to the proposed Scheme and the recent archaeological finds within the WHS. The Council submitted responses to each consultation.

On 12 November 2020, the Secretary of State for Transport decided to make, with modifications, a DCO granting development consent for the proposals in the application.

The Council will have further involvement and input into the implementation of the A303 Stonehenge scheme, as secured through the DCO Examination process, and in order to fulfil its statutory duties regarding various aspects of the construction and implementation of this road improvement scheme.

## **Proposals**

Members are asked to:

1. Welcome the Secretary of State's decision regarding the A303 Stonehenge Development Consent Order.
2. To agree the proposed recurring budget of £300,000 within the Highways budget for the A303 Stonehenge scheme until 2026/27.
3. Agree the delegation of authority to the Director Transport and Environment to:
  - a) Continue to input into the scheme by providing consultation responses to the various plans and documents being produced by Highways England for inclusion within the consultation reports to be considered by the Secretary of State.
  - b) Negotiate and agree the level of maintenance contributions associated with the de-trunked and local road elements, including public rights of way, of the scheme.
  - c) Agree the design and construction of the new local roads and rights of way, or alterations of existing arising from the scheme.
  - d) Agree and implement any associated traffic regulation measures arising from or required by the scheme.
  - e) Approve the heritage management plans, site specific written schemes of investigation and method statements for the archaeological mitigation works and to monitor and approve the archaeological fieldwork.

## **Reasons for Proposals**

The case for dualling the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down has long been established through promoting economic growth in the South West, increasing safety, improving connectivity with neighbouring regions and protecting and enhancing the environment and the world heritage site.

In order to fulfil its statutory duties promptly regarding the construction and implementation of this important road improvement scheme it is considered appropriate to delegate authority to the Director Transport and Environment in connection with this scheme.

**Terence Herbert**  
**Chief Executive**

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**5 January 2021**

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**Subject: A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Road Scheme**

**Cabinet Member: Cllr Bridget Wayman Cabinet member for Highways, Transport and Waste**

**Key Decision: Key**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the actions taken in relation to the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down (Stonehenge) road improvement scheme since the previous reports set out below.
2. To confirm that the Secretary of State decided to make, with modifications, a DCO granting development consent for the proposals in the application on 12 November 2020.
3. To confirm the Council's involvement and input into the implementation of the A303 Stonehenge scheme, as secured through the DCO Examination process.
4. To agree the proposed delegated authority provision to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duties with regard to the construction and implementation of this road improvement scheme.
5. To outline the expected benefits that the A303 Stonehenge scheme will bring to residents, the World Heritage Site, Wiltshire and the south-west.
6. To agree the proposed recurring budget of £300,000 within the Highways budget for the A303 Stonehenge scheme until 2026/27.

### **Relevance to the Council's Business Plan**

7. Improvements along the A303 help meet the priorities of the Council's Business Plan 2017-2027, including:
  - Growing the Economy:
    - High Skilled Jobs (Employment)
    - Transport and Infrastructure (Access)
  - Strong Communities:
    - Safe Communities (Protection)
    - Personal Wellbeing (Prevention)
  - Working with Our Partners:

- Community Involvement
- Delivering Together

## Background

8. Dualling the A303 and A358 is a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP) as defined by the Planning Act 2008 (the Planning Act).
9. This NSIP was promoted by Highways England under the requirements of the Planning Act to secure a DCO to allow work to begin. This process involved detailed engagement with the general public, local communities and stakeholders.
10. The DCO process and the role of Local Authorities within this process was the subject of a previous Cabinet report on 15 March 2016 ([Cabinet Papers Item 39](#)).
11. The timetable for the development of this road improvement scheme, the Council's involvement and governance arrangements established to fully engage and manage this project, and the estimated resource implications for the various professional areas were detailed in a Cabinet report considered on 11 October 2016 ([Cabinet Papers Item 118](#)).
12. The route options appraisal methodology and outcome selected by Highways England (HE) to take to public consultation, along with the Council's response to the non-statutory consultation, was contained within a previous Cabinet report on 14 March 2017 ([Cabinet Papers Item 35](#)).
13. An overview of the HE scheme upon which views were being sought at the statutory consultation stage, along with the Council's response to this statutory consultation and the proposed delegated authority provisions to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duties with regard to the DCO process, were detailed in a Cabinet report considered on 24 April 2018 ([Cabinet Papers Item 223](#)).
14. All documents submitted by HE, Wiltshire Council and other stakeholders during the Examination of the DCO application are accessible through the A303 Stonehenge National Infrastructure Planning website ([A303 Stonehenge](#)). This includes the draft DCO, Outline Environmental Management Plan and Detailed Archaeological Mitigation Strategy as well as a variety of documentation related to other subject areas.
15. The road improvement scheme is approximately eight miles (nearly thirteen kilometres) in length. HE's consultation booklet described the scheme as follows:
 

*"The proposed scheme would comprise a new dual, two-lane carriageway between Amesbury and Berwick Down with the following key features:*

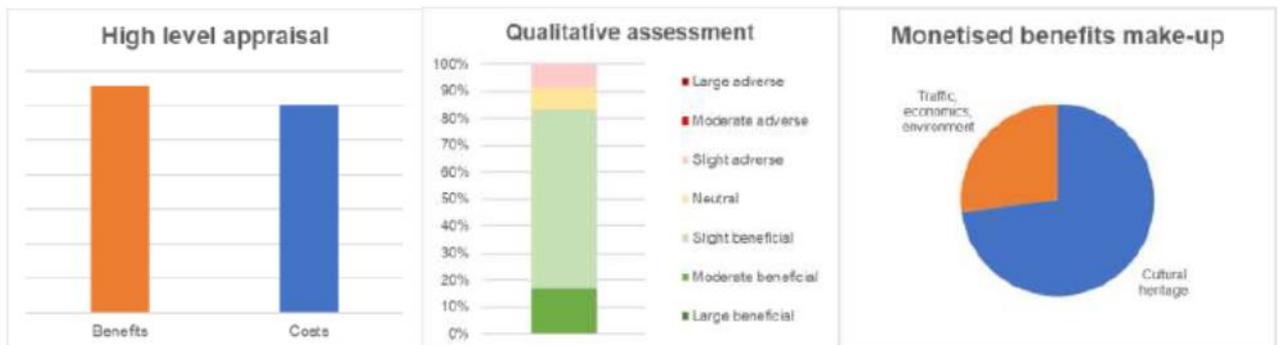
  - *A bypass to the north of Winterbourne Stoke with a viaduct over the River Till valley*

- *Grassland habitat creation that would allow extension of the Parsonage Down National Nature Reserve*
- *A new junction with the A360 to the west of and outside the World Heritage Site (WHS), with the A303 passing under the junction*
- *A section through the WHS with a twin-bore tunnel past Stonehenge at least 1.8 miles (2.9 kilometres) long*
- *A new junction with the A345 at the existing Countess roundabout to the north of Amesbury, with the A303 passing over the junction*
- *The conversion of the existing A303 through the WHS into a route for walking, cycling and horse riding*
- *New 'green bridges' to connect existing habitats and allow the movement of wildlife, maintain existing agricultural access and provide crossing for existing and new bridleways and public footpaths."*

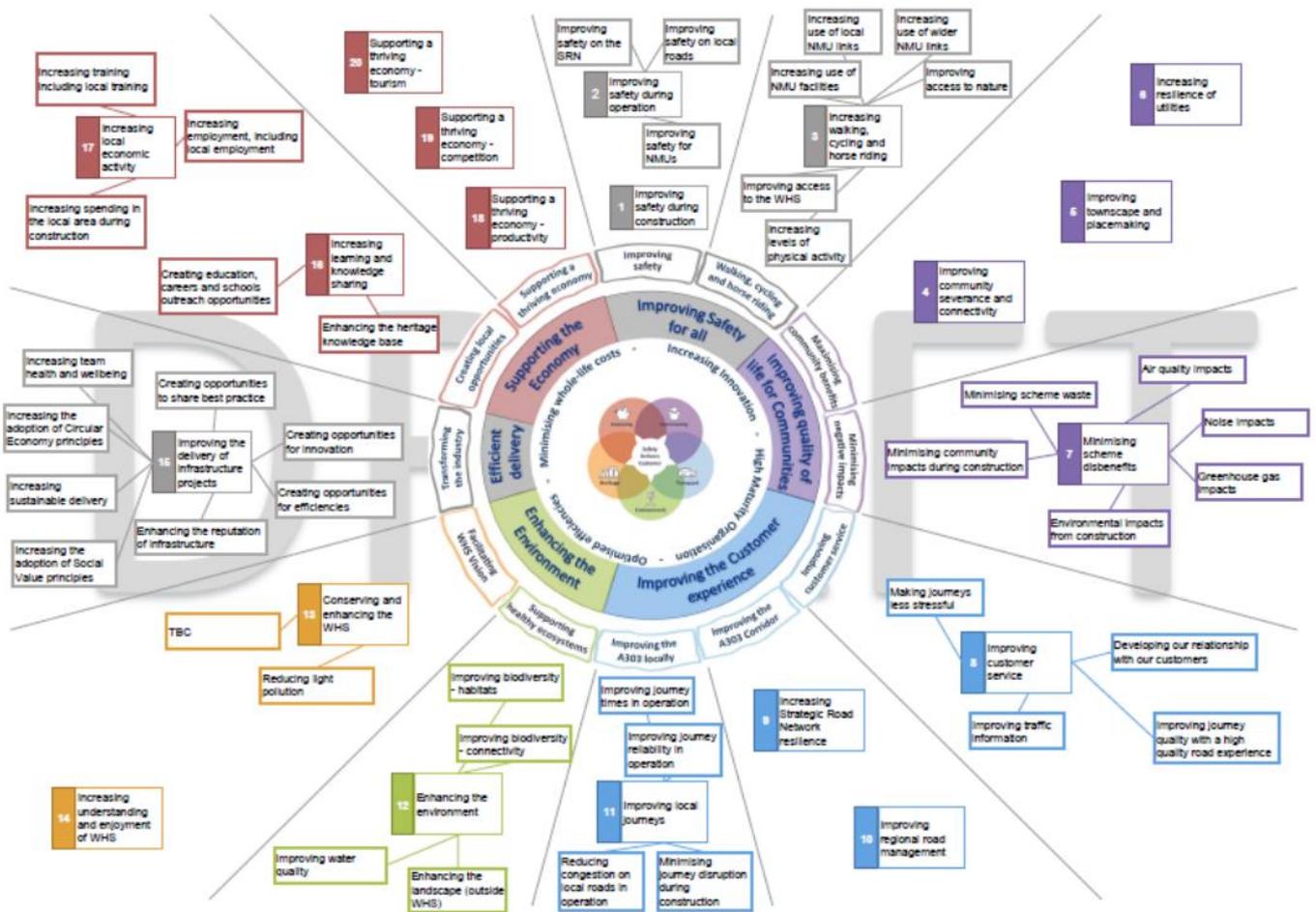
## Main Considerations for the Council

### A303 Stonehenge Scheme Benefits

16. HE has conducted an economic appraisal to estimate the A303 Stonehenge scheme's expected benefits. From the HE's charts below, it can be seen that the expected benefits outweigh the scheme's estimated costs, that the balance of non-monetised impacts is net positive and that cultural heritage represents the largest monetised scheme benefit.



17. There are direct benefits embedded within the scheme's design; for example, through the creation of a free-flowing route which would reduce rat-running within the surrounding communities or the removal of community severance within Winterbourne Stoke, but there are also those benefits that would be achieved through HE's intention for the scheme to leave a lasting legacy for Wiltshire. The HE's draft benefits map is illustrated below, which identifies the anticipated benefits in relation to the primary scheme objectives.



18. Appraisal and evaluation studies of the scheme's projected benefits are ongoing and include cultural heritage evaluation studies, appraisal of non-traffic benefits, and an A303/A358 corridor appraisal.
19. The A303 Stonehenge scheme will also create a range of employment and supply chain opportunities for Wiltshire residents and businesses. HE has produced an Employment and Skills Plan for the scheme, which includes provision for between 110 and 250 headcount comprising trainees, apprentices, undergraduate placements, graduate training schemes and post graduate placements; 250 schools outreach events, workshops and presentations; work placements; targeted work placements; and a viable and sustainable 'Overcoming Barriers to Employment' programme. A variety of commitments have also been included within the main works contract comprising an Inclusion Action Plan, guaranteed interview scheme for military and care leavers, and active promotion of employment of military leavers, reservists, partners and dependents.
20. Discussions are also ongoing regarding supply chain opportunities for the preliminary works and opportunities for local training. It is intended for a "Meet the Buyer" event to be hosted to promote local supply chain opportunities for the preliminary works. This could include materials and labour provision, but also accommodation and hospitality services etc.

21. HE has established a Benefits Steering Group for the scheme to oversee benefit identification and realisation, which includes representatives from a variety of key stakeholders, including Wiltshire Council. A Community Forum has also been established, which has an independent chair, and comprises elected members, town and parish councils and representatives from community groups.
22. In terms of creating a wider legacy for the scheme, the A303 Stonehenge project has been successful in obtaining Designated Funds to deliver a number of strategies to date including a Connecting Communities study, a Burrowing Mammals Strategy for the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS, a Biodiversity Strategy and an Exploring the WHS and Beyond strategy which considered landscape access, sustainable transport and sustainable tourism. Additional funding has also been secured to deliver eight biodiversity projects which will create biodiversity enhancement and watercourse improvement within Wiltshire.

#### A303 Stonehenge Scheme Development and Examination

23. Following the statutory public consultation held between 8 February 2018 and 23 April 2018, HE undertook a further supplementary consultation between 17 July 2018 to 14 August 2018 seeking views on three proposed changes to the scheme, being to remove the previously proposed link between Byways 11 and 12 in the WHS, to widen the green bridge proposed near the existing Longbarrow roundabout and to amend the proposed modification of Rollestone crossroads. The consultation also sought to provide further clarification on the various public rights of way proposals.
24. Wiltshire Council responded to the supplementary consultation on 13 August 2018 and whilst supportive of the proposed modification of Rollestone crossroads, the Council did raise concerns relating to the removal of the link between byways 11 and 12 and some of the wider public rights of way proposals. These issues were considered further during the Examination of the scheme.
25. HE submitted the A303 Stonehenge DCO application on 19 October 2018 and it was accepted for Examination on 16 November 2018. To assist with this determination, Wiltshire Council submitted its Adequacy of Community Consultation representation on 2 November 2018, which indicated that on balance HE's consultation was considered adequate in line with Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the 2008 Planning Act.
26. A panel of five inspectors were appointed as the Examining Authority (ExA) to oversee the Examination proceedings. Wiltshire Council submitted its Relevant Representation on the A303 scheme on 11 January 2019. In total, 2,375 submissions were received, which were taken into consideration by the ExA.
27. The DCO Examination commenced on 2 April 2019 and concluded on 2 October 2019. During the course of the Examination, there were twelve

official deadlines for the submission of information to the ExA, with additional submissions also made at the close of Examination. There were eleven issue specific hearings held, as well as a compulsory acquisition hearing and four open floor hearings. Two accompanied site inspections were also undertaken, along with an additional ten unaccompanied site inspections by various members of the ExA. During the Examination, HE undertook a consultation on eight proposed non-material changes to the DCO application between 26 July and 26 August 2019. The ExA accepted these changes into Examination on 27 September 2019.

28. The Examination considered the following principal issues associated with the A303 Stonehenge scheme: agriculture; air quality, dust and other emissions; alternatives; biodiversity, biological environment and ecology; compulsory acquisition; draft Development Consent Order; flood risk, groundwater protection, geology and land contamination; health and wellbeing; heritage and historic environment; landscape and visual effects and design; noise and vibration; socio-economic effects; traffic and transportation; and waste and material management. The ExA also considered climate change effects in its recommendation report.
29. Wiltshire Council participated fully in the DCO Examination. The following notable submissions were made during the course of the Examination: Local Impact Report (18 April 2019), Written Representation (3 May 2019), Addendum to Written Representation (10 May 2019), Legal Submission on Byways AMES 11 and 12 (21 June 2019), Notification of Withdrawal of Proposed DCO Amendments relating to Byways AMES 11 and 12 (9 August 2019), Final Comments on draft DCO, Outline Environmental Management Plan and Detailed Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (2 October 2019), Final Statement of Common Ground with Highways England (2 October 2019), and Closing Statement (2 October 2019).
30. As a result of substantial changes made by HE during the Examination in response to issues raised by Wiltshire Council and other key stakeholders, Council officers considered at the close of the Examination that the majority of the concerns outlined in the Local Impact Report (LIR) had been sufficiently mitigated through provisions contained within the draft DCO (dDCO), Outline Environmental Management Plan (OEMP), Detailed Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (DAMS) and the Council's Side Agreement with HE.
31. From a cultural heritage perspective, the Council's LIR concluded that the most significant negative impact would be the new dual carriageway and cutting on the western part of the WHS. Following the review of additional photo montages and visualisations produced during the Examination, officers accepted that there would be less of an impact from the Winterbourne Stoke Barrow Group than previously thought; however, concerns remained about the visual impact on the northern part of the Normanton Barrow Group, the Diamond Group and other monuments and their settings within the visibility of the western end of the scheme. Council officers consider it a missed opportunity to significantly reduce this impact through additional cover.

However, it is thought this can be mitigated to some extent by the use of green infrastructure or other design solutions.

32. Furthermore, officers would have preferred for the junction and dumbbell roundabout replacing the existing Longbarrow roundabout to be modified to avoid impacting upon the Oatlands Hill buried archaeological remains, especially the C-shaped enclosure. However, HE could not achieve this due to site constraints. These negative impacts at the western end of the scheme will require mitigation at detailed design stage.
33. Officers were also concerned that the closure of the existing A303 and resultant loss of the travelling motorised public's ability to obtain a passing free view of the Stonehenge monument would increase use of byways AMES 11 and 12 by the travelling motorised public to an inappropriate level. If this concern does arise, the Council's existing Highways Authority powers are sufficient to deal with this and through its Side Agreement with HE, provision has been included for monitoring of traffic within these byways once the Scheme becomes operational (to avoid delays caused by evidence gathering) and for assistance with any costs associated with any resultant Traffic Regulation Orders.
34. Another fundamental concern for Council officers during the Examination was HE being the approving authority for the Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) and other documents / plans. This was considered inappropriate as HE would in effect be a judge in its own cause which may have resulted in actual or perceived bias. Following representations made by the Council, the Secretary of State's approval of these documents will now be sought following consultation with the Council and other key stakeholders.
35. In its closing statement, Wiltshire Council indicated that it considers the A303 Stonehenge scheme would achieve the objectives as set by Highways England and that it would generate benefits in relation to transport, economic growth, cultural heritage and environment, and community.

#### Secretary of State Consent for the Scheme

36. Following the submission of the ExA's recommendation to the Secretary of State on 2 January 2020, a decision on the scheme was expected by 2 April 2020. However, due to the Secretary of State's need to obtain further information, the decision deadline was extended until 17 July 2020 and then again until 13 November 2020. During this time, the Secretary of State sought additional information and comment on three occasions relating to the proposed Scheme and the recent archaeological finds within the WHS. The Council submitted responses to each consultation.
37. On 12 November 2020, the Secretary of State for Transport decided to make, with modifications, a DCO granting development consent for the proposals in the application.

38. It should be noted that the ExA recommended refusal of the scheme as it determined that the “adverse impacts of the Proposed Development would strongly outweigh its benefits”. These impacts predominantly relate to the historic environment and the landscape and visual amenity.
39. In his decision rationale, the Secretary of State notes that the ExA’s conclusions are “ultimately matters of planning judgement on which there have been differing and informed opinions and evidence submitted to the examination...the ExA’s view on the level of harm being substantial is not supported by the positions of the Applicant, Wiltshire Council, the National Trust, the English Heritage Trust, DCMS and Historic England.” It goes on to state “when considering the impact of the Development as a whole and the mitigation measures to be put in place, the Secretary of State is satisfied that on balance the need case for the Development together with the other benefits identified outweigh any harm”.
40. In line with legislation, whilst there is no right of appeal under the Planning Act 2008, a request for a Judicial Review of the decision can be lodged with the High Court within six-weeks of the date of decision.

#### Wiltshire Council’s Role and Remit During Scheme Delivery

41. The A303 Stonehenge scheme will be undertaken in two phases, being the preliminary works and main works phases.
42. The main elements of the preliminary works phase will comprise: the archaeological mitigation works; the realignment of Rollestone Crossroads; the diversion of the existing Allington Track and associated modifications to Equinox Drive and byway AMES 1; safety improvements at the Double Hedges junction; and a variety of ecological mitigation works. HE has appointed Osbourne as the civils engineering contractor for the preliminary works and Wessex Archaeology as the archaeological contractor for the scheme. Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service will however be monitoring and approving the archaeological fieldwork and subsequent reporting and publication. Work on site is anticipated to commence in spring 2021.
43. Whilst being progressed as separate packages of work, the utilities connections associated with the scheme, for example to provide power connections to the construction site compounds and tunnel boring machine, will commence in 2021. It should be noted that there could be significant disruptions on the A360 for installation of electricity supply from Wilton to the site near Longbarrow. The ESSO pipeline work is also expected to commence in 2021.

#### Proposed Delegated Authority Provisions

44. In order to progress matters on behalf of the Council it is proposed that delegated authority should be granted to the Director of Highways and Environment to:

- (i) Continue to input into the scheme by providing consultation responses to the various plans and documents being produced by HE for inclusion within the consultation reports to be considered by the Secretary of State.
- (ii) Negotiate and agree the level of maintenance contributions associated with the de-trunked and local road elements, including public rights of way, of the scheme.
- (iii) Agree the design and construction of the new local roads and rights of way or alterations of existing arising from the scheme.
- (iv) Agree and implement any associated traffic regulation measures arising from or required by the scheme.
- (v) Approve the heritage management plans, site specific written schemes of investigation and method statements for the archaeological mitigation works and to monitor and approve the fieldwork.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Engagement**

- 45. A Briefing Note on the proposed scheme was provided to the Environment Select Committee in March 2018 in order for it to present its views to the Chairman so that they could be reflected in the Cabinet report on the scheme at the Cabinet meeting on 24 April 2018.
- 46. In addition to the ESC engagement detailed above, regular Stakeholder Engagement Meetings have been held by HE to ensure that local Members are involved in the development of this road scheme. Presentations were also delivered at the relevant Area Board meetings in Amesbury, Mere and Warminster when requested by the Chair.
- 47. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Environment Select Committee were briefed about the scheme on 15 December 2020

### **Safeguarding Implications**

- 48. None.

### **Public Health and Public Protection Implications**

- 49. The A303 Stonehenge scheme will deliver community benefit through the permanent reduction in community severance in Winterbourne Stoke, which will improve social cohesion. The creation of a wider restricted byway network will offer greater opportunities for access to the WHS and wider area for all non-motorised users. The scheme will also reunite the WHS landscape and reduce severance, thereby improving connectivity for walkers, runners, cyclists and horse riders.
- 50. The scheme will provide a permanent improvement in access to local employment and training opportunities through improved journey time reliability, which would lead to improved health and wellbeing. The improved access to and within the WHS will also enhance learning and interpretation.

51. It is recognised that there is the potential for noise and vibration and air quality effects arising from construction activities to impact on the health of residents and local workers. However, Council officers consider that the protections contained within the draft DCO and OEMP will ensure appropriate provisions are put in place to minimise any adverse effects as far as possible.

### **Procurement Implications**

52. None.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

53. An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted by HE for the A303 Stonehenge scheme.
54. Whilst this assessment identified a number of likely benefits, it also identified several scheme impacts which may disproportionately impact upon those groups with protected characteristics. These included increased noise levels during construction and operation for some residential properties in the area, which may disproportionately affect children and older people; temporary diversions and closures to public rights of way and footpaths as well as permanent changes to routes which may have a greater impact on people with mobility issues; and potential differential effects for drivers using the network including drivers with disabilities, young people, older people and women (including pregnant women).
55. Council officers consider that through the wealth of mitigation measures included within the OEMP and through the adoption of an inclusive scheme design, these potential adverse effects would be sufficiently minimised.
56. HE will also undertake extensive consultation and engagement activities with affected stakeholders and the local community during scheme delivery. A dedicated Community Relations Manager will be appointed through the main works contractor, and one of the overall responsibilities of this role is to ensure that the needs of groups with protected characteristics are considered during the construction process.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

57. The scheme's environmental and climate change implications have been fully assessed during the DCO Examination. For further information see the A303 Stonehenge National Infrastructure Planning website ( [A303 Stonehenge](#) ).
58. Wiltshire Council officers consider that there are likely to be permanent beneficial landscape and visual effects in scheme operation due to improved tranquillity, habitat creation and a reduction in landscape severance within the WHS. The creation of additional chalk grassland at Parsonage Down will also support increased populations of a wide range of chalk flora, invertebrates and small mammals. It is considered that there is potential for a net gain for biodiversity. There is also the potential to increase flood risk. The monitoring

and mitigation strategy would be set out in the groundwater management plan, flood risk management plan and associated documents.

59. Whilst the scheme is likely to have some negative impacts during construction, the protections secured within the OEMP relating to the Nile Clumps, temporary compounds, fencing, hoardings, lighting and the production of a preliminary works and main works CEMP, with the commitment to ensure that the effects of multiple CEMPs do not combine to produce adverse effects on biodiversity, mitigate these to a large extent.
60. From a cultural heritage perspective, Council officers consider that the most significant positive impacts will be the removal of the A303 from the immediate setting of Stonehenge and the eastern part of the WHS. It will also remove the existing severance caused by the existing A303 at the centre of the WHS between the proposed portal locations, which will improve the setting of key groups of monuments, which contribute to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and improve access and visual connectivity between them. Officers also consider that the proposed new route between Allington Track and Equinox Drive, which includes a diversion of byway AMES 1 to avoid the group of Scheduled Barrows (Ratfyn Barrows) will remove traffic from the immediate vicinity of these Barrows.
61. The greatest concerns for cultural heritage are at the western end of the scheme, which require mitigation at detailed design stage. However, as a result of the Design Vision, Design Principles and Design Commitments contained within the OEMP, officers have assurance that the detailed design will assist with conforming with the overall vision, aims and objectives of the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan (2015) and sustain the OUV of the WHS.
62. The DAMS sets out a robust framework for the archaeological mitigation works and through the Council's approval of Site Specific Written Schemes of Investigation (SSWSIs), Heritage Management Plans (HMPs) and Method Statements (MS), officers are confident that this work can be undertaken to their satisfaction.
63. The primary source of policy guidance regarding the assessment of climate change impacts for this scheme are contained in the policies within the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN). The HE also considered the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document.
64. The ExA noted that the Environmental Statement assessment addressed the effects on the climate of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions arising from the proposed development and demonstrates that the proposed development's impact as a proportion of total UK carbon emissions would be negligible.
65. The Environmental Statement indicates that the scheme will include mitigation measures to reduce energy consumption and associated carbon emissions during construction, and where practicable measures will be implemented to

use materials with lower embedded GHG emissions, sustainably resourced materials and recycled or secondary materials.

## **Risk Assessment**

66. This is a controversial scheme and there are opposing views held by stakeholders, residents and the wider public. The Council will be required to undertake its role following a thorough assessment of the evidence available and whilst drawing on its considerable knowledge and expertise across a range of service areas.
67. The Secretary of State will approve the majority of plans and documentation associated with the methodology and implementation of this scheme. The Council, along with other key stakeholders and statutory bodies, will be able to provide comment and feedback on these documents during the minimum two rounds of consultation, which will be undertaken by HE, prior to the approval from the Secretary of State being sought. A consultation report will accompany all approval requests to the Secretary of State, which must set out where feedback from a key stakeholder has not been addressed within the submitted documentation.

### Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

68. The Council would not fulfil its statutory obligations as stipulated by the DCO and in its role as the host local authority.

### Risk that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

69. The Council will continue to work closely with HE and other key stakeholders to manage the inputs required to deliver the A303 Stonehenge scheme.
70. This scheme has the potential to cause disruption to the local road network, and consequently for residents, businesses and commuters, during its construction period. Robust traffic management arrangements will be put in place and continually monitored to minimise disruption wherever possible.
71. The development and implementation of this scheme will be quite resource intensive for the Council and therefore additional resource will be allocated or secured as necessary utilising the agreed funding from HE and the proposed A303 budget.
72. Members will be regularly updated at key stages of the A303 Stonehenge implementation programme.

## **Financial Implications**

73. A recurring budget of £300,000 has previously been included within the Highways budget to cover the additional resource requirements for this programme until 2020/21. Additionally, the Council entered into a Planning

Performance Agreement with HE for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 to enable it to reclaim a proportion of its resource costs associated with those aspects of scheme development, which were over and above that which the Council would normally expend on a road improvement scheme.

74. Following the Secretary of State's consent for the scheme's DCO, the Council will incur additional resource implications associated with the scheme's delivery. It is proposed that the existing £300,000 budget is continued until 2026/27 to cover these anticipated resource implications. The A303 budget would continue to be held within the Highways budget.
75. During the course of the DCO examination, the Council negotiated and entered into a Side Agreement with HE, which provides a legal framework for the Council to reclaim those costs associated with the assessment and agreement of the scheme's impact on the local roads network, including the associated contribution for ongoing maintenance. This agreement also includes provision for additional archaeological resource due to the extensive archaeological mitigation works proposed for the scheme, which the Council will oversee and approve.
76. A Section 8 agreement under the Highways Act has also been put in place with HE which provides a mechanism for the Council to undertake work on HE's behalf through its term contract providers. Any agreed expenditure for work undertaken through this agreement would be reimbursed by HE.

## **Legal Implications**

77. It is HE that is the lead body in the application for a DCO. The role of the Council within this process is as a statutory consultee (and one of the principal consultees).
78. As well as its role as a consultee the Council is also the local highway authority and will become responsible for the sections of road de-trunked in connection with the scheme and the new roads provided under the Preliminary Works contracts.
79. The DCO process is designed to be a one stop process for addressing all of the various regulatory requirements that will normally accompany a significant infrastructure project. Those regulatory requirements also include matters for which the Council has oversight including as Land Drainage Authority, Local Planning Authority (including cultural and heritage) Highway Authority, and principle authority for the area etc.
80. In this case after a detailed examination the Secretary of State has made the Development Consent Order on 12 November 2020 which provides the framework to ensure that these regulatory requirements can be complied with.

81. The details provided and delegations sought within this report are consistent with the Development Consent Order as made and will allow the Council to carry out its operational regulatory functions based on the specialist professional judgment, knowledge and skills of the various services within the Council in an efficient and effective way and is consistent with the Council's constitution.

### **Workforce Implications**

82. The A303 Stonehenge scheme requires input from a variety of Council services and disciplines. A multi-discipline team is in place comprising representatives from highways, archaeology, landscape, ecology, public rights of way, flood and drainage, network management, legal, development management, public protection, community engagement, communications, finance, employment and skills and the corporate programme office.
83. Additional resources and specialist input may be required during scheme implementation and to ensure that the full benefits of the scheme are embedded and realised.
84. Upon receipt of the scheme's detailed delivery programme from HE, the full anticipated resources requirements will be ascertained and secured to ensure that the Council's obligations can be met.

### **Options Considered**

85. None.

### **Conclusions**

86. The case for dualling the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down has long been established through promoting economic growth in the South West, increasing safety, improving connectivity with neighbouring regions and protecting and enhancing the environment.
87. Wiltshire Council participated fully in the DCO Examination. As a result of substantial changes made by HE during the Examination in response to issues raised by Wiltshire Council and other key stakeholders, Council officers considered at the close of the Examination that the majority of the concerns outlined in the LIR had been sufficiently mitigated through provisions contained within the dDCO, Outline Environmental Management Plan (OEMP), Detailed Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (DAMS) and the Council's Side Agreement with HE.
88. The Council will continue to input into the scheme by providing consultation responses to the various plans and documents being produced by HE for inclusion within the consultation report to be considered by the Secretary of State.

**Terence Herbert**  
**Chief Executive**

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Date of report: 5 January 2021

**The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:**

None

**Appendices**

None